PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS
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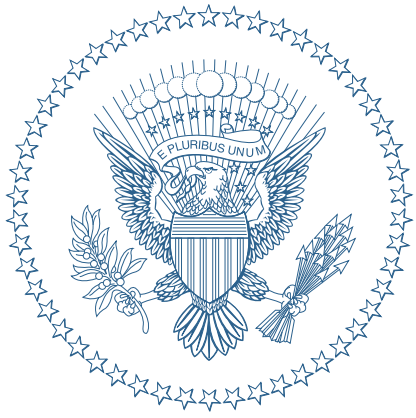
PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS
OF THE
UNITED STATES

Barack Obama



2014

(IN TWO BOOKS)

BOOK I—JANUARY 1 TO JUNE 30, 2014

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Foreword

We began 2014 confident that it would be a breakthrough year for America.

The year prior, our businesses continued to recover from the Great Recession, creating another two million new jobs. Implementation of the Affordable Care Act was poised to send the uninsured rate plummeting. A fairer tax code helped bring our deficits to less than half of what they were when I took office. Our high school graduation rate reached its highest level on record, and more people earned college degrees than ever before. And as our economy grew, we redoubled our efforts to raise wages and place more Americans in better, higher-earning jobs. Overseas, we led the fight against emerging threats, and after more than 12 years in Afghanistan, we began bringing home more of our troops from the longest war in our history. With the shadow of economic crisis passing, and countries around the world looking to us for leadership, America was now better-positioned for the 21st century than any other nation on Earth.

The unemployment rate at the beginning of 2014 reached a 5-year low. But even as more Americans went back to work, long-term economic trends kept wages stagnant. So, with a Congress stubbornly opposed to taking action, my Administration executed a worker-focused agenda with the mission of restoring opportunity for all using tools within our control. I issued an Executive Order that raised the minimum wage for all workers on Federal service and construction contracts and worked with States and cities to raise their minimum wages when the Congress refused to raise the Federal minimum wage. We built new high-tech manufacturing hubs that will use the results of scientific research and technological innovation to attract 21st-century jobs to our shores and to rebuild our infrastructure, and we proposed a substantial increase in the Federal Budget for research and development activities. In the absence of congressional action to improve the Federal child care program, which was more than 10 years overdue for revision, we proposed a number of changes to expand access to high-quality, affordable child care—an investment that not only pays off by giving parents greater flexibility today, but can continue to pay off over the course of a child's entire lifetime.

We established initiatives to give working Americans a greater sense of security. The Affordable Care Act's major coverage provisions took effect, providing coverage options to millions of Americans through the Health Insurance Marketplace and an expanded Medicaid program. More than 10 million Americans, and more than 3 million young people who were able to stay on their family's plan, knew the peace of mind that comes with having quality, affordable health insurance—numbers that would only grow. At the same time, a number of the Act's policies to slow health care cost growth had taken effect, providing early dividends for employers, the Federal budget, and the economy.

As we worked to make life better and more secure for families here at home, we kept up our efforts to keep Americans safe and to secure peace and prosperity for people around the world. In coordination with our allies and the Afghan government, we agreed to begin the process of concluding our combat mission in Afghanistan while upholding our enduring commitment to disrupt ongoing threats, support Afghan security forces, and give the Afghan people the chance to succeed as they stand on their own. Additionally, the United States stood in solidarity with Ukraine when its sovereignty was threatened by Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea and aggressive actions in Eastern Ukraine, ramping up sanctions on Russia and pledging our support for the Ukrainian people. America forged and led a global coalition to enable our partners in Iraq and Syria to degrade and destroy the terrorist organization known as ISIL. And while very real threats demanded more than ever from our intelligence agencies, I announced reforms designed to ensure their activities are carried out with appropriate oversight and respect for Americans' civil liberties and privacy while retaining key capabilities to keep us safe. Through it all, our steadfast commitment to caring for our selfless men and women in uniform and their families remained stronger than ever. When allegations of misconduct at Veterans Affairs facilities were brought to my attention, I initiated an investigation of our procedures and any existing problems at VA medical centers across our country, and we brought in new leadership to help improve VA services.

The first half of the year ushered in new and serious challenges. But if we work together, in common purpose, then a future in which honest work is plentiful, communities are strong, prosperity is widely shared, and opportunity is open to all will be firmly within our reach. In spite of these challenges, my faith in the American people continues to grow stronger than ever.

Preface

This book contains the papers and speeches of the President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period January 1–June 30, 2014. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against an audio recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless otherwise indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed in full text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. On January 20, 2009, the printed Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents was superseded by the online Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents. The Daily Compilation provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Also included in the printed edition are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed in full text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George W. Bush are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of John Hyrum Martinez, Director of the Publications and Services Division, Office of the Federal

Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit. The Chief Editor of this book was Joseph K. Vetter; the Managing Editor was Joshua H. Liberatore, assisted by Amelia E. Otovo.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Publishing Office under the direction of John Crawford, Acting Deputy Director and Managing Director of Plant Operations.

Oliver A. Potts
Director of the Federal Register

David S. Ferriero
Archivist of the United States

Contents

Foreword . . . v

Preface . . . vii

Cabinet . . . xi

Public Papers of Barack Obama,
January 1–June 30, 2014 . . . 1

Appendix A
Digest of Other White House Announcements . . . 821

Appendix B
Nominations Submitted to the Senate . . . 861

Appendix C
Checklist of White House Press Releases . . . 885

Appendix D
Presidential Documents Published in the *Federal Register* . . . 903

Subject Index . . . A–1

Name Index . . . B–1

Document Categories List . . . C–1

Cabinet

Vice President	Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Secretary of State	John F. Kerry
Secretary of the Treasury	Jacob J. Lew
Secretary of Defense	Charles T. Hagel
Attorney General	Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Secretary of the Interior	Sarah M.R. "Sally" Jewell
Secretary of Agriculture	Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Commerce	Penny S. Pritzker
Secretary of Labor	Thomas E. Perez
Secretary of Health and Human Services	Kathleen Sebelius (resigned June 5) Sylvia Mathews Burwell (confirmed June 5)
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development	Shaun L.S. Donovan
Secretary of Transportation	Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary of Energy	Ernest J. Moniz
Secretary of Education	Arne Duncan
Secretary of Veterans Affairs	Eric K. Shinseki (resigned May 30) Sloan D. Gibson, Acting
Secretary of Homeland Security	Jeh C. Johnson
Chief of Staff	Denis R. McDonough
Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency	Regina McCarthy
United States Trade Representative	Michael B. Froman

Director of the Office of Management and Budget	Sylvia Mathews Burwell (resigned June 5) Brian C. Deese, Acting
Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers	Jason L. Furman
United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations	Samantha Power
Administrator of the Small Business Administration	Maria Contreras-Sweet (confirmed March 27)

Administration of Barack Obama

2014

Statement on the Health of Former First Lady Barbara Bush
January 1, 2014

Michelle and I send our best wishes to Mrs. Bush for a speedy recovery. Barbara is blessed to have both a loving, supportive family by her side and a vibrant spirit that we hope will have her feeling better soon. I know I speak for Americans everywhere when I say that our thoughts and prayers are with Barbara and her family on this New Year's Day.

The President's Weekly Address
January 4, 2014

Hi, everybody, and happy New Year.

This is a time when we look ahead to all the possibilities and opportunities of the year to come, when we resolve to better ourselves and to better our relationships with one another. And today I want to talk about one place that Washington should start, a place where we can make a real and powerful difference in the lives of many of our fellow Americans right now.

Just a few days after Christmas, more than 1 million of our fellow Americans lost a vital economic lifeline: the temporary insurance that helps folks make ends meet while they look for a job. Republicans in Congress went home for the holidays and let that lifeline expire. And for many of their constituents who are unemployed through no fault of their own, that decision will leave them with no income at all.

We make this promise to one another because it makes a difference to a mother who needs help feeding her kids while she's looking for work. It makes a difference to a father who needs help paying the rent while learning the skills to get a new and better job. And denying families that security is just plain cruel. We're a better country than that. We don't abandon our fellow Americans when times get tough; we keep the faith with them until they start that new job.

What's more, it actually slows down the economy for all of us. If folks can't pay their bills or buy the basics, like food and clothes, local businesses take a hit and hire fewer workers. That's why the independent Congressional Budget Office says that unless Congress restores this insurance, we'll feel a drag on our economic growth this year. And after our businesses created more than 2 million new jobs last year, that's a self-inflicted wound we don't need.

So when Congress comes back to work this week, their first order of business should be making this right. Right now a bipartisan group in Congress is working on a 3-month extension of unemployment insurance, and if they pass it, I will sign it. For decades, Republicans and Democrats put partisanship and ideology aside to offer some security for job seekers, even when the unemployment rate was lower than it is today. Instead of punishing families who can least afford it, Republicans should make it their New Year's resolution to do the right thing and restore this vital economic security for their constituents right now.

After all, our focus as a country this year shouldn't be shrinking our economy, but growing it; not narrowing opportunity, but expanding it; not fewer jobs, but doing everything we can to help our businesses create more of the good jobs that a growing middle class requires. That's my New Year's resolution: to do everything I can every single day to help make 2014 a year in which more of our citizens can earn their own piece of the American Dream.

After 5 years of working and sacrificing to recover and rebuild from crisis, we have it within our power right now to move this country forward. It's entirely up to us. And I'm optimistic for the year that lies ahead.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 19, 2013, in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on January 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 3, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on January 4.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Janet L. Yellen as Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
January 6, 2014

With the bipartisan confirmation of Janet Yellen as the next Chair of the Federal Reserve, the American people will have a fierce champion who understands that the ultimate goal of economic and financial policymaking is to improve the lives, jobs, and standard of living of American workers and their families. As one of our Nation's most respected economists and a leading voice at the Fed for more than a decade—and Vice Chair for the past 3 years—Janet helped pull our economy out of recession and put us on the path of steady growth. Janet is committed to the Fed's dual mandate of keeping inflation in check while also addressing our most important economic challenge by reducing unemployment and creating jobs. And she understands that fostering a stable financial system will help the overall economy and protect consumers. I am confident that Janet will stand up for American workers, protect consumers, foster the stability of our financial system, and help keep our economy growing for years to come.

Remarks on Emergency Unemployment Insurance
January 7, 2014

The President. Please, everybody, have a seat. Well, happy New Year, everybody.

Audience members. Happy New Year!

The President. Hope you're keeping warm. A few weeks ago, I said that 2014 could be a breakthrough year for America. Think about it: Five years ago this month, our economy was shedding 800,000 jobs, just in 1 month. But as Americans buckled down and worked hard and sacrificed, we began to come back.

And our businesses have created more than 8 million new jobs since we hit the bottom. Our auto industry has gone from bust to boom. Manufacturing is rebounding. The housing market's rebounding. Stock markets are restoring retirement accounts. The promise of energy independence is actually in sight. Health care costs eat up less of our economy; over the past 4 years, costs have grown at the slowest rate on record. And since I took office, we've cut our deficits by more than half.

So America is getting stronger, and we've made progress. And the economy is growing, and we've got to do more to make sure that all Americans share in that growth. We've got to help our businesses create more jobs. We've got to make sure those jobs offer the wages and benefits that let families rebuild a little security. In other words, we've got to make sure that this recovery leaves nobody behind. And we've got a lot of work to do on that front. The good news is, I'm optimistic we can do it if we do it together.

Now, before the holidays, both parties compromised on a budget that lifts some of the drag that's been on the economy from these indiscriminate cuts we call sequester. And as a consequence, this year, we may see more stability when it comes to economic growth. And I think I'm not alone in saying that we are all grateful in the new year that we won't have another partisan shutdown, hopefully, going forward.

So that was a good sign. And we should build on that progress with what I said should be the first order of business in 2014, and that is extending insurance for the unemployed.

The good news is, this morning the Senate took a very important step in that direction.

For the Americans who have joined me at the White House today and millions like them who were laid off in the recession through no fault of their own, unemployment insurance has been a vital economic lifeline. For a lot of people, it's the only source of income they've got to support their families while they look for a new job. These aren't folks who are just sitting back waiting for things to happen. They're out there actively looking for work. They desperately want work.

But although the economy has been growing and we've been adding new jobs, the truth of the matter is, is that the financial crisis was so devastating that there's still a lot of people who are struggling. And in fact, if we don't provide unemployment insurance, it makes it harder for them to find a job.

You heard Katherine's story. And she's far more eloquent than I could ever be. She wrote me last month to say, "Please let those who think I am sitting at home enjoying being unemployed know that I'd much rather be working." And I had a chance to talk to Katherine, and I think it's pretty clear that that's the case. Katherine went on to say: "I have applied to everything for which I am possibly qualified to no avail. I have worked hard all my life, paid taxes, voted, engaged in political discussion, and made the ultimate sacrifice: My two sons serve in the U.S. military. Job loss is devastating, and if I could fix it myself, I would. I challenge any lawmaker to live without an income." That's what Katherine said. [*Laughter*] It's hard.

So when we've got the mom of two of our troops, who is working hard out there, but is having to wear a coat inside the house, we've got a problem. And it's one that can be fixed. And Katherine is not alone.

Devlin Smith, who's watching today from her home in California, wrote me about her hunt for a new job. Since she was laid off 13 months ago, she has sent out hundreds of résumés, she has volunteered, she has done seasonal work. She doesn't want to just be sitting around the house. She's been taking online courses to learn new skills. Without unemployment insurance, though, she won't be able to pay for her car or her cell phone, which makes the job hunt that much harder. And Devlin wrote to me and said: "I've wanted nothing more than to find a new full-time job, and I've dedicated every day to that mission. I'm asking you to advocate for me and the millions like me who need our extended unemployment benefits to make ends meet."

So I just want everybody to understand, this is not an abstraction. These are not statistics. These are your neighbors, your friends, your family members. It could at some point be any of us. That's why we set up a system of unemployment insurance. The notion was, everybody is making a contribution because you don't know when the business cycle or an economic crisis might make any of us vulnerable.

And this insurance helps keep food on the table while Dad is sending out résumés. It helps Mom pay the rent while she's learning new skills to earn that new job. It provides that extra bit of security so that losing your job doesn't mean that you have to lose your house or everything you've worked so hard to build for years. We make this promise to our fellow Americans who are working hard to get back on their feet because when times get tough, we are not a people who say, you're on your own. We're a people who believe that we're all in it together. And we know, "There but the grace of God go I."

So that's the values case for this. That's the moral case for this. But there's an economic case for it as well. Independent economists have shown that extending emergency unemployment insurance actually helps the economy, actually creates new jobs. When folks like Katherine have a little more to spend to turn up the heat in her house or buy a few extra groceries, that means more spending with businesses in her local community, which in turn may inspire that business to hire one more person, maybe Kathy.

That's why, in the past, both parties have repeatedly put partisanship and ideology aside to offer some security for job seekers with no strings attached. It's been done regardless of

whether Democrats or Republicans were in the White House. It's been done regardless of whether Democrats or Republicans controlled Congress. And by the way, it's done—it's been done multiple times when the unemployment rate was significantly lower than it is today.

And what's important to keep in mind also is that the recovery in a big country like the United States is going to be somewhat uneven. So there are some States that have a 2.5 unemployment rate, and then there are some places that may still have a 7-, 8-, 9-percent unemployment rate. The people living in those respective States may be working equally hard to find a job, but it's going to be harder in some places than others.

Now, 2 weeks ago, Congress went home for the holidays and let this lifeline expire for 1.3 million Americans. If this doesn't get fixed, it will hurt about 14 million Americans over the course of this year, 5 million workers along with 9 million of their family members: their spouses, their kids.

Now, I've heard the argument that says extending unemployment insurance will somehow hurt the unemployed because it saps their motivation to get a new job. [*Laughter*] I really want to go at this for a second. [*Laughter*] I—that really sells the American people short. I meet a lot of people as President of the United States and as a candidate for President of the United States and as a U.S. Senator and as a State senator. I meet a lot of people. And I can't name a time where I met an American who would rather have an unemployment check than the pride of having a job.

The long-term unemployed are not lazy. And they're not lacking in motivation. They're coping with the aftermath of the worst economic crisis in generations. In some cases, they may have a skills mismatch. Right? They may have been doing a certain job for 20 years; suddenly, they lose that job. They may be an older worker, may have to get retrained. It's hard. Sometimes, employers will discriminate if you've been out of work for a while; they decide, well, we're not sure we want to hire you, we'd rather hire somebody who's still working right now.

So it's hard out there. There are a lot of our friends, a lot of our neighbors who have lost their jobs, and they are working their tails off every single day trying to find a new job. Now, as the job market keeps getting better, more and more of these folks will find work. But in the meantime, the insurance keeps them from falling off a cliff. It makes sure they can pay their car note to go to that interview. It makes sure they can pay their cell phone bill so that if somebody calls back for an interview, they can answer it. [*Laughter*]

And Katherine explained this. Katherine, in the letter that she wrote to me, said, do folks really think that "cutting this benefit will make someone hire me?" I mean, that's not how employers are thinking.

So letting unemployment insurance expire for millions of Americans is wrong. Congress should make things right. I am very appreciative that they're on their way to doing just that thanks to the bipartisan work of two Senators. You had a Democrat from Rhode Island, Senator Reed, and you had a conservative Republican from Nevada, Senator Heller. And despite their political differences, they worked together on a plan to extend unemployment insurance at least for 3 months, temporarily, while we figure out a longer term solution. And this morning, a bipartisan majority of Senators agreed to allow this commonsense provision to at least move forward in the process.

Now, the Senate is a complicated place. [*Laughter*] So just because they agreed on this vote, all they've agreed to so far is that we're actually going to be able to have a vote on it. They haven't actually passed it. So we've got to get this across the finish line without obstruction or delay, and we need the House of Representatives to be able to vote for it as well. And it's—that's the bottom line.

Voting for unemployment insurance helps people and creates jobs, and voting against it does not. Congress should pass this bipartisan plan right away, and I will sign it right away. And more than 1 million Americans across the country will feel a little hope right away. And hope is contagious.

When Katherine has a little bit more confidence about her situation, when she finds a job, she is going to be able to help somebody down the line maybe who is also down on their luck. When Congress passes a bipartisan effort starting here right at the beginning of the new year, who knows, we might actually get some things done this year. [*Laughter*] So after all the hard work and sacrifice of the past 5 years to recover and rebuild from the crisis, what I think the American people are really looking for in 2014 is just a little bit of stability. Let's just do the commonsense thing. Let's do what's right.

We're going to have to require—we're going to have to see action, though, on the part of Congress. And I'll be willing to work with them every step of the way: action to help our businesses create more of the good jobs that a growing middle class requires, action to restore economic mobility and reduce inequality, action to open more doors of opportunity for everybody who is willing to work hard and walk through those doors.

When I was listening to Katherine, I was just so struck by her strength and dignity. And I think people, when they bump into some tough times, like Katherine, they're not looking for pity, they just want a shot. And they just want to feel as if, you know what, as a part of this country, as a part of their communities, that if misfortune strikes, all the things that they've done in the past, all the hard work they've done raising children and paying taxes and working hard, that that counts for something and that folks aren't suddenly just going to dismiss their concerns, but we're going to rally behind them. That's not too much to ask. That's who we are as Americans. That's what built this country. That's what I want to promote.

So thank you very much, everybody. And let's get to work. Let's get this done. I appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Moodus, CT, resident Katherine Hackett, who introduced the President. He also referred to H.J. Res. 59, which was approved December 26, 2013, and assigned Public Law No. 113–67.

Statement on the Observance of the Coptic Orthodox Christmas
January 7, 2014

Michelle and I wish Coptic Orthodox Christians in the United States and around the world a joyous Christmas. On this special day, we celebrate the messages of peace and hope that continue to inspire congregations more than 2,000 years after Jesus' birth. During this season, we reaffirm the commitment of the United States to work for the protection of Christians and other people of faith in Egypt and around the world. The freedom to practice our faiths is critical to stable, pluralistic, and thriving societies, and the United States will continue to be vigilant in its work to protect that freedom. We wish Coptic Christians the blessings of this season and join them in offering prayers for peace in the year ahead.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the American Institute in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy
January 7, 2014

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153(b), (d)) (the "Act"), the text of a

proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States (TECRO) Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (the "Agreement"). I am also pleased to transmit my written approval, authorization, and determination concerning the Agreement, and an unclassified Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement (NPAS) concerning the Agreement. (In accordance with section 123 of the Act, as amended by title XII of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–277), a classified annex to the NPAS, prepared by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, summarizing relevant classified information, will be submitted to the Congress separately.) The joint memorandum submitted to me by the Secretaries of State and Energy and a letter from the Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) stating the views of the Commission are also enclosed. An addendum to the NPAS containing a comprehensive analysis of the export control system of Taiwan with respect to nuclear-related matters, including interactions with other countries of proliferation concern and the actual or suspected nuclear, dual-use, or missile-related transfers to such countries, pursuant to section 102A of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 403–1), as amended, is being submitted separately by the Director of National Intelligence.

The proposed Agreement has been negotiated in accordance with the Act and other applicable law. In my judgment, it meets all applicable statutory requirements and will advance the nonproliferation and other foreign policy interests of the United States.

The proposed Agreement provides a comprehensive framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation with the authorities on Taiwan based on a mutual commitment to nuclear nonproliferation. The proposed Agreement has an indefinite term from the date of its entry-into-force, unless terminated by either party on 1 year's written notice. The proposed Agreement permits the transfer of information, material, equipment (including reactors), and components for nuclear research and nuclear power production. The Agreement also specifies cooperation shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement and applicable legal obligations, including, as appropriate, treaties, international agreements, domestic laws, regulations, and/or licensing requirements (such as those imposed by the NRC in accordance with 10 CFR 110 and the Department of Energy in accordance with 10 CFR 810). It does not permit transfers of Restricted Data, sensitive nuclear technology and facilities, or major critical components of such facilities. The proposed Agreement also prohibits the possession of sensitive nuclear facilities and any engagement in activities involving sensitive nuclear technology in the territory of the authorities represented by TECRO. In the event of termination of the proposed Agreement, key nonproliferation conditions and controls continue with respect to material, equipment, and components subject to the proposed Agreement.

Over the last two decades, the authorities on Taiwan have established a reliable record on nonproliferation and on commitments to nonproliferation. While the political status of the authorities on Taiwan prevents them from formally acceding to multilateral nonproliferation treaties or agreements, the authorities on Taiwan have voluntarily assumed commitments to adhere to the provisions of multilateral treaties and initiatives. The Republic of China ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1970 and ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (the "Biological Weapons Convention" or "BWC") in 1972. The authorities on Taiwan have stated that they will continue to abide by the obligations of the NPT (i.e., those of a non-nuclear-weapon state) and the BWC, and the United States regards them as bound by both treaties. The authorities on Taiwan follow International Atomic Energy Agency standards and directives in their nuclear program, work closely with U.S. civilian nuclear authorities, and have established relationships with mainland Chinese civilian authori-

ties with respect to nuclear safety. A more detailed discussion of the domestic civil nuclear activities and nuclear nonproliferation policies and practices of the authorities on Taiwan, including their nuclear export policies and practices, is provided in the NPAS and in a classified annex to the NPAS submitted separately. As noted above, an addendum to the NPAS containing a comprehensive analysis of the export control system of the authorities on Taiwan with respect to nuclear-related matters is being submitted to you separately by the Director of National Intelligence.

I have considered the views and recommendations of the interested agencies in reviewing the proposed Agreement and have determined that its performance will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved the Agreement and authorized its execution and urge the Congress to give it favorable consideration.

This transmission shall constitute a submittal for purposes of both sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Act. My Administration is prepared to begin immediately the consultations with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee as provided in section 123 b. Upon completion of the 30 days of continuous session review provided for in section 123 b., the 60 days of continuous session review provided for in section 123 d. shall commence.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
January 7, 2014.

Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the War on Poverty
January 8, 2014

As Americans, we believe that everyone who works hard deserves a chance at opportunity and that all our citizens deserve some basic measure of security. And so, 50 years ago, President Johnson declared a War on Poverty to help each and every American fulfill his or her basic hopes. We created new avenues of opportunity through jobs and education, expanded access to health care for seniors, the poor, and Americans with disabilities, and helped working families make ends meet. Without Social Security, nearly half of seniors would be living in poverty. Today, fewer than one in seven do. Before Medicare, only half of seniors had some form of health insurance. Today, virtually all do. And because we expanded prowork and profamily programs like the earned-income tax credit, a recent study found that the poverty rate has fallen by nearly 40 percent since the 1960s and kept millions from falling into poverty during the great recession.

These endeavors didn't just make us a better country. They reaffirmed that we are a great country. They lived up to our best hopes as a people who value the dignity and potential of every human being. But as every American knows, our work is far from over. In the richest nation on Earth, far too many children are still born into poverty, far too few have a fair shot to escape it, and Americans of all races and backgrounds experience wages and incomes that aren't rising, making it harder to share in the opportunities a growing economy provides. That does not mean, as some suggest, abandoning the War on Poverty. In fact, if we hadn't declared "unconditional war on poverty in America," millions more Americans would be living in poverty today. Instead, it means we must redouble our efforts to make sure our economy works for every working American. It means helping our businesses create new jobs with stronger wages and benefits, expanding access to education and health care, rebuilding those communities on the outskirts of hope, and constructing new ladders of opportunity for our people to climb.

We are a country that keeps the promises we've made. And in a 21st-century economy, we will make sure that as America grows stronger, this recovery leaves no one behind. Because for all that has changed in the 50 years

since President Johnson dedicated us to this economic and moral mission, one constant of our character has not: We are one Nation and one people, and we rise or fall together.

Statement on Representative Carolyn McCarthy's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
January 8, 2014

As a Representative of the people of New York in the U.S. Congress, Carolyn McCarthy has earned a reputation for principled and compassionate leadership. In particular, she's been at the forefront of the issue that brought her to Washington 17 years ago: reducing and preventing gun violence. She was also instrumental in the passage of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act to prevent future financial crises and has been a leading advocate for improving education, especially college affordability. Like many across the Nation, Michelle and I admire Carolyn's determination and personal strength. We thank her for her service and send her and her family our warmest regards.

Statement on Representative Douglas C. "Mike" McIntyre's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
January 8, 2014

In his 17 years representing the people of North Carolina in the U.S. Congress, Mike McIntyre has been a strong advocate for our men and women in uniform and a key voice on issues that shape the lives of Americans in rural communities. He's also been an active participant in the annual National Prayer Breakfast, a reflection of his deep faith. Michelle and I thank Congressman McIntyre for his service, and we wish him, his wife Dee, and their two sons the very best in the future.

NOTE: The statement referred to Dee Strickland McIntyre, wife of Rep. McIntyre, and their sons Joshua and Stephen.

Remarks on the Promise Zones Initiative
January 9, 2014

Good job. Thank you. Well, everybody, have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. And that was one of the best introductions I've ever had. [*Laughter*] So we're so proud of Kiara for that introduction and for sharing your story, and you're just so poised. And I know Geoff Canada is just out there all excited—[*laughter*]—and proud, so—and I know your mom is proud. I know she is. She should be.

Kiara and the rest of these young people grew up in a 97-square-block section of Harlem. It's a place where the odds used to be stacked against them every single day. Even just graduating from high school was a challenge. But with the help of some very dedicated adults and a program called the Harlem's Children's Zone, they're right on track to go to college. Together, students, teachers, administrators, parents, community, they're changing the odds in this neighborhood. And that's what we're here to talk about today: changing the odds for every American child so that no matter who they are, no matter where they are born, they have a chance to succeed in today's economy.

Now, the good news is that, thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of the American people all across the country over the last 5 years, our economy has grown stronger. Our busi-

nesses have now created more than 8 million new jobs since the depths of the recession. Our manufacturing, our housing sectors are rebounding. Our energy and technology and auto industries are booming. And we've got to keep our economy growing. We've got to make sure that everybody is sharing in that growth. We've got to keep creating jobs, and then we've got to make sure that wages and benefits are such that families can rebuild a little bit of security. We've got to make sure this recovery, which is real, leaves nobody behind. And that's going to be my focus throughout the year.

This is going to be a year of action. That's what the American people expect, and they're ready and willing to pitch in and help. This is not just a job for government, this is a job for everybody.

Working people are looking for the kind of stable, secure jobs that too often went overseas in the past couple of decades. So next week, I'll join companies and colleges and take action to boost high-tech manufacturing, the kind that attracts good new jobs and helps grow a middle class. Business owners are ready to play their part to hire more workers. So this month, I'm going to host CEOs here at the White House not once, but twice: first to lay out specific steps we can take to help more workers earn the skills that they need for today's new jobs; second, they're going to announce commitments that we're making to put more of the long-term unemployed back to work.

And on January 28, in my State of the Union Address—which, I want all the legislators here to know, I'm going to try to keep a little shorter than usual—[*laughter*]—they're cheering silently—[*laughter*]—I will mobilize the country around the national mission of making sure our economy offers every American who works hard a fair shot at success. Anybody in this country who works hard should have a fair shot at success, period. It doesn't matter where they come from, what region of the country, what they look like, what their last name is, they should be able to succeed.

And obviously, we're coming off of a rancorous political year, but I genuinely believe that this is not a partisan issue. Because when you talk to the American people, you know that there are people working in soup kitchens and people who are mentoring and people who are starting small businesses and hiring their neighbors and very rarely are they checking, are they Democrat or Republican? There's a sense of neighborliness that's inherent in the American people; we just have to tap into that.

And I've been very happy to see that there are Republicans like Rand Paul, who's here today, who are ready to engage in this debate. That's a good thing. We've got Democratic and Republican elected officials across the country who are ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work. And this should be a challenge that unites us all.

I don't care whether the ideas are Democrat or Republican. I do care that they work. I do care that they are subject to evaluation and we can see if we are using tax dollars in a certain way; if we're starting a certain program, I want to make sure that young people like Kiara are actually benefiting from them.

Now, it's one thing to say we should help more Americans get ahead, but talk is cheap. We've got to actually make sure that we do it. And I will work with anybody who's willing to lay out some concrete ideas to create jobs, help more middle class families find security in today's economy, and offer new ladders of opportunity for folks to climb into the middle class.

And personally, I hope we start by listening to the majority of the American people and restoring the unemployment insurance for Americans who need a little help supporting their families while they look for a new job. And I'm glad that Republicans and Democrats in the Senate are working together to extend that lifeline. I hope their colleagues in the House will join them to set this right.

Today I want to talk about something very particular, a specific example of how we can make a difference. We are here with leaders who are determined to change the odds in their communities the way these kids and their parents and dedicated citizens have changed the odds in Harlem. It's now been 50 years since President Johnson declared an unconditional

War on Poverty in America. And that groundbreaking effort created new avenues of opportunity for generations of Americans. It strengthened our safety net for working families and seniors, Americans with disabilities, and the poor, so that when we fall—and you never know what life brings you—we can bounce back faster. It made us a better country and a stronger country.

In his speech 50 years ago, President Johnson talked about communities "on the outskirts of hope where opportunity was hard to come by." Well, today's economic challenges are different, but they've still resulted in communities where in recent decades wrenching economic change has made opportunity harder and harder to come by. There are communities where for too many young people, it feels like their future only extends to the next street corner or the outskirts of town; too many communities where no matter how hard you work, your destiny is—feels like it's already been determined for you before you took that first step.

I'm not just talking about pockets of poverty in our inner cities. That's the stereotype. I'm talking about suburban neighborhoods that have been hammered by the housing crisis. I'm talking about manufacturing towns that still haven't recovered after the local plants shut down and jobs dried up. There are islands of rural America where jobs are scarce—they were scarce even before the recession hit—so that young people feel like if they want to actually succeed, they've got to leave town, they've got to leave their communities.

And I've seen this personally even before I got into politics. In fact, this is what drove me into politics. I was just 2 years out of college when I first moved to the South Side of Chicago. I was hired by a group of churches to help organize a community that had been devastated when the local steel plants closed their doors. And I'd walk through neighborhoods filled up with boarded-up houses and crumbling schools and single parents and dads who had nothing to do with their kids and kids who were hanging out on the street corners without any hope or prospects for the future.

But these churches came together. And then they started working with other nonprofits and businesses—local businesses. And the government—local, State, and Federal—participated. And we started getting some things done that gave people hope. And that experience taught me that government does not have all the answers. No amount of money can take the place of a loving parent in a child's life. But I did learn that when communities and governments and businesses and non-for-profits work together, we can make a difference. Kiara is proof—all these young people are proof—we can make a difference.

For the last 17 years, the Harlem Children's Zone—the brainchild of Geoffrey Canada, who's here today—has proven we can make a difference. And it operated on a basic premise: that each child will do better if all the children around them are doing better. So in Harlem, staff members go door to door and they recruit soon-to-be parents for "Baby College," preparing them for those crucial first few months of life; making sure that they understand how to talk to their child and read to their child; and sometimes working with the parents to teach them how to read so they can read to their child and give them the healthy start that they need.

And then, early childhood education to get kids learning at 4 years old. And then a charter school that help students succeed all the way through high school. And medical care and healthy foods that are available close to home. And exercise, I was very pleased to hear that—Michelle was very pleased to hear that—[*laughter*]—that they've got a strong phys ed program. And then students getting help finding internships and applying to college and an outstanding, dedicated staff that tries to make sure that nobody slips through the cracks or falls behind.

And this is an incredible achievement, and the results have been tremendous. Today, preschool students in the Harlem's Children's Zone are better prepared for kindergarten. Last year, a study found that students who win a spot in one of the charter schools score higher on standardized tests than those who don't.

In a neighborhood where higher education was once just something that other people did, you've got hundreds of kids who have now gone to college.

And Harlem is not the only community that's found success taking on these challenges together. In Cincinnati, a focus on education has helped to make sure more kids are ready for kindergarten. In Nashville, they've redesigned high schools and boosted graduation rates by almost 20 percent over the past 12 years. In Milwaukee, they've cut teen pregnancy in half.

Every community is different, with different needs and different approaches. But communities that are making the most progress on these issues have some things in common. They don't look for a single silver bullet; instead, they bring together local government and nonprofits and businesses and teachers and parents around a shared goal. That's what Geoffrey did when he started the Harlem Children's Zone. Government was involved. So don't be confused here: It has an important role to play. And already there are government resources going into these communities. But it's important that our faith institutions and our businesses and the parents and the communities themselves are involved in designing and thinking through how do we move forward.

And the second thing is, they're holding themselves accountable by delivering measurable results. We don't fund things, we don't start projects just for the sake of starting them. They've got to work. If they don't work we should try something else. And sometimes, those of us who care deeply about advancing opportunity aren't willing to subject some of these programs to that test: Do they work?

Now, in my State of the Union Address last year, I announced our commitment to identify more communities like these—urban, rural, tribal—where dedicated citizens are determined to make a difference and turn things around. And we challenged them. We said, if you can demonstrate the ability and the will to launch an all-encompassing, all-hands-on-deck approach to reducing poverty and expanding opportunity, we'll help you get the resources to do it. We'll take some—resources from some of the programs that we're already doing and concentrate them. We'll make sure that our agencies are working together more effectively. We'll put in talent to help you plan. But we're also going to hold you accountable and measure your progress.

And if you're doing real stuff that is making a difference in the lives of young people like Kiara, then we're going to be there. Your country will help you remake your community on behalf of your kids, family by family, block by block.

We call these communities Promise Zones. They're neighborhoods where we will help local efforts to meet one national goal: that a child's course in life should be determined not by the ZIP Code she's born in, but by the strength of her work ethic and the scope of her dreams.

So we're here today to announce the first five Promise Zones in America. And I could not be prouder to be joined by Mayor Eric Garcetti of Los Angeles; and Mayor Michael Nutter of Philadelphia; and Councilwoman Ivy Taylor from San Antonio; Chief Gregory Pyle, one of our tribal leaders; and Jerry Rickett from the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation—some of the leaders from these neighborhoods who are helping to make it happen.

In the East Side neighborhood of San Antonio, nearly 4 in 10 adults don't have a high school diploma. The violent crime rate is 50-percent higher than the rest of the city. So schools and community members are focused on getting more kids into pre-K, boosting math and science in high school, and they're putting more cops on foot patrol to make their neighborhoods safer. It's a project worth investing in.

In a section of L.A. that stretches from Pico-Union to Hollywood, the population decreased by 13,000 people in just 10 years. So developers are working to build more affordable housing. Technical schools and community colleges are helping more people get the training they need to get jobs. It's a project worth investing in.

In Philly, nearly 4 out of every 10 kids lives below the poverty line, and a lot of them are on

the west side of the city. So a local university is helping connect middle and high school students with mentors to get them ready for college. You've got a supermarket that's being planned that will create jobs and provide healthy food where there's been too little of both. We're going to invest in that.

In Senator Mitch McConnell's home State of Kentucky, there are communities that have been struggling for decades with shutdowns and layoffs. So they're taking steps, locally initiated, to attract new businesses and create new jobs in new industries. And you've got a local college that's stepping up to expand technical training and help more kids get a higher education.

In the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, where up to half of the residents in some areas live in poverty, community leaders are determined to change things. And they're making financing available to help women start their own businesses. They're investing in new water and sewer systems that will make the area more attractive for companies looking to locate there. And they're helping farmers and ranchers create more jobs and more families thereby get access to healthy foods.

So these are America's first five Promise Zones. And over the next 3 years, we're going to help launch 20 in all. And each of these communities is designing from the bottom up, not the top down, what it is they think they need, and we're working with them to make that happen. And each of these communities is prepared to do what it takes to change the odds for their kids. We will help them succeed, not with a handout, but as partners with them every step of the way. And we're going to make sure it works, and we're going to hold them accountable to make sure it is making a difference in the lives of kids.

As a nation, we've got plenty of reasons to hope. And I just want to end with one story just to give you a sense of what we're talking about here. Roger Brown came here today from Harlem. Where is Roger? There he is right here. I used to have a haircut like that, but—[*laughter*]—and maybe after I'm done with the Presidency, I'm going back to that. [*Laughter*]

Growing up—I want you to listen to Roger's story, because it's unique and it's special, but it's also representative. So growing up, Roger spent some time in the foster care system before going to live with his mom, who was working two jobs to make ends meet. When Roger was in sixth grade, his mom entered his name in the Promise Academy Charter School lottery and prayed. And Roger won a spot.

Now, the way I hear it, Roger, you were still having some problems sometimes. He was the class clown and acting out and almost got himself expelled. But the teachers and the staff did not give up on him. They saw something in him. They kept pushing him. And then one summer when Roger was home visiting his foster family, he looked around the room, and he realized nobody in that room had gone to college and nobody in that room had a job. And at that moment, something clicked. And Roger decided he wanted something better for himself—and for his mom and for his two sisters that looked up to him.

So Roger buckled down. He went from failing his classes to passing his classes. He became a member of the first graduating class at the Promise Academy. And today, Roger is a sophomore at Hunter College in New York, one of the best colleges in the country, the first person in his family to get that far. And now he wants to go to medical school and become a neurologist. So—[*applause*].

If you want to know why I care about this stuff so much, it's because I'm not that different from Roger. There was a period of time in my life where I was goofing off. I was raised by a single mom. I didn't know my dad. The only difference between me and Roger was my environment was more forgiving than his. That's the only difference. If I screwed up, the consequences weren't quite as great.

So if Roger can make it, and if I can make it, if Kiara can make it, every kid in this country can make it. But we've got to believe in that. We can't just give lip service to it. And it can't just get caught up in a bunch of political arguments.

There are legitimate questions about how the best way to do this is, how we can best

make progress. And there are legitimate debates to be had about how big of a role is government in that process, how big of a role is the private sector. And there's no disagreement that there has to be individual initiative; it's got to start inside. Roger had to have a change of attitude. I had to have a change in attitude. Kiara, she probably didn't need a change in attitude. [*Laughter*] She was focused the whole time.

We don't dispute that, but we do know that sometimes, we talk about this stuff as if we care, and then we don't deliver. We don't follow through. We don't make the effort. It's not sustained. We lose interest. And then we say to ourselves, well, maybe nothing can be done, and we put up with it. And as a consequence, a lot of our kids get lost. And we can't allow that to happen. That's what the Promise Zones represent.

I want more kids to have the chance that Roger got. I want more kids to have the chance this country gave me. We should all want every one of our kids and their families to have a shot at success. If you are willing to dream big and work hard, you should grow up with the same opportunities in life as any other child living in any other place.

That's what we're fighting for. That's what America is about. So let's act. Let's make it happen this year. All right?

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kiara Molina, student, Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy; Geoffrey Canada, president and chief executive officer, Harlem Children's Zone, Inc.; Gregory E. Pyle, chief, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; and Jerry Rickett, president and chief executive officer, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corp.

The President's Weekly Address
January 11, 2014

Hi, everybody. Yesterday we learned that in 2013, our businesses created 2.2 million new jobs, including 87,000 last month. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been since October 2008. And across our broader economy, there are signs of progress. Our manufacturing and housing sectors are rebounding. Our energy, technology, and auto sectors are booming. Thanks in part to the reforms in the Affordable Care Act, health care costs now eat up less of our economy: Over the past 4 years, costs have grown at the slowest rate on record. And since I took office, we've cut our deficits by more than half.

Thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of the American people, our economy is growing stronger. But we know we've got more work to do together. Our success as a country depends on more than the success of our broader economy, it depends on the success of the American people. It depends on your ability to make ends meet, provide for your family, and with a little hard work, feel like you can get ahead.

So we've got to keep our economy growing and make sure more Americans have the opportunity to share in that growth. We've got to keep creating jobs that offer new opportunity and make sure those jobs offer the wages and benefits that let you rebuild some security. We've got more kids to educate and families to get covered with health insurance and an immigration system to fix. And we've got to make sure this recovery leaves no one behind.

So this will be a year of action. I'll keep doing everything I can to create new jobs and new opportunities for American families: with Congress—or on my own—and with everyone willing to play their part. And that action should begin by extending unemployment insurance for Americans who were laid off in the recession through no fault of their own. This vital economic lifeline helps people support their families while they look for a new job. And it demands responsibility in return by requiring that they prove they're actively looking for work. But before the holidays, Republicans

in Congress just let that lifeline expire for 1.3 million Americans. And if this doesn't get fixed, it will actually hurt about 14 million Americans over the course of this year. Earlier this week, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate took the first steps toward making this right. But Congress needs to finish the job right away. More than 1 million Americans across the country will feel a little hope right away if they do.

Working folks are looking for the kind of stable, secure jobs that went overseas in the past couple of decades. So next week, I'll join companies and colleges and take action to boost the high-tech manufacturing that attracts the kind of good new jobs a growing middle class requires.

Business owners are ready to play their part and hire more workers. So next week, I'll be joined by college presidents as we lay out specific steps to help more young people go to college and graduate with the skills they need for today's new jobs. Later this month, I'll host CEOs at the White House to announce commitments we're making to put more of the long-term unemployed back to work.

And at the end of the month, in my State of the Union Address, I will mobilize the country around the national mission of making sure our economy offers everyone who works hard a fair shot at opportunity and success. As Americans, that's what we should expect. And after everything you've done to recover and rebuild from crisis this past 5 years, after all your hard work and sacrifice, that's what you deserve.

Thanks. Have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:05 p.m. on January 10 in the State Dining Room at the White House for broadcast on January 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 10, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on January 11.

Statement on the Death of Former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel
January 11, 2014

On behalf of the American people, Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to the family of former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and to the people of Israel on the loss of a leader who dedicated his life to the State of Israel. We reaffirm our unshakable commitment to Israel's security and our appreciation for the enduring friendship between our two countries and our two peoples. We continue to strive for lasting peace and security for the people of Israel, including through our commitment to the goal of two states living side by side in peace and security. As Israel says goodbye to Prime Minister Sharon, we join with the Israeli people in honoring his commitment to his country.

Statement on the Implementation of the Joint Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon
January 12, 2014

Today's agreement to implement the Joint Plan of Action announced in November marks the first time in a decade that the Islamic Republic of Iran has agreed to specific actions that halt progress on its nuclear program and roll back key parts of the program. Beginning January 20th, Iran will for the first time start eliminating its stockpile of higher levels of enriched uranium and dismantling some of the infrastructure that makes such enrichment possible. Iran has agreed to limit its enrichment capability by not installing or starting up additional centrifuges or using next-generation centrifuges. New and more frequent inspections of Iran's nuclear sites will allow the world to verify that Iran is keeping its commitments. Taken together, these and other steps will advance our goal of pre-

venting Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

In return, over the next 6 months, the United States and our P5-plus-1 partners—the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China, as well as the European Union—will begin to implement modest relief so long as Iran fulfills its obligations and as we pursue a comprehensive solution to Iran's nuclear program. Meanwhile, we will continue to vigorously enforce the broader sanctions regime, and if Iran fails to meet its commitments, we will move to increase our sanctions.

Unprecedented sanctions and tough diplomacy helped to bring Iran to the negotiating table, and I'm grateful to our partners in Congress who share our goal of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Imposing additional sanctions now will only risk derailing our efforts to resolve this issue peacefully, and I will veto any legislation enacting new sanctions during the negotiation.

With today's agreement, we have made concrete progress. I welcome this important step forward, and we will now focus on the critical work of pursuing a comprehensive resolution that addresses our concerns over Iran's nuclear program. I have no illusions about how hard it will be to achieve this objective, but for the sake of our national security and the peace and security of the world, now is the time to give diplomacy a chance to succeed.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy Brey of Spain and an Exchange With Reporters

January 13, 2014

President Obama. Well, let me say it's a great pleasure to welcome my friend, Prime Minister Rajoy, to the Oval Office. We have had occasions to work together on a wide range of international issues, and obviously, the cooperation reflects the incredible alliance and friendship between our countries that has lasted for decades.

The Prime Minister came into power during a very challenging time in Spain. Obviously, the economy had undergone some wrenching difficulties that existed throughout Europe and the euro zone, and I congratulated the Prime Minister on the progress that's been made in stabilizing the economy, moving into growth, reducing the deficit, and being able to return to the financial markets in a way that reflects sound leadership.

We also obviously focused on the future, and even as Spain has stabilized, there are still enormous challenges that lie ahead with respect to bringing down unemployment and increasing growth. And that's not unique to Spain; that's true throughout Europe. And frankly, that's true here in the United States and around the world. And so we pledge to continue to cooperate closely to promote strategies for growth and job creation. One of those strategies is to put together a transatlantic trade agreement. We both agreed that there is enormous potential for increasing trade and growth between two of the largest economic actors in the world, but it will require intensive work and serious compromise on all sides, and the Prime Minister and I agreed that it's well worth the effort.

On the security front, we discussed a wide range of challenges. I remarked that I think security cooperation between the United States and Spain has never been stronger. We thank the Prime Minister and his government as well as the opposition in Spain for the support they have for our work together, including hosting some of our military operations and facilities, which allow us, I think, to protect our Embassies and to deal with issues of counterterrorism. And we pledged to continue to try to improve and deepen what is already a very strong defense relationship.

Finally, we spoke about a wide range of international issues, including our concerns about terrorism, the situation in Syria, how that might impact security in Spain, Europe, and the United States. And we committed to

working closely together on those issues, including helping countries like Libya stabilize so that they can do right by their people, but also can be effective partners with us. And we discussed the enormous opportunities that exist in places like Latin America, where we've seen continued solidification of democratic trends, free market trends. And we agreed that the United States and Spain can be effective partners on the international stage in moving towards a more prosperous and more peaceful and more stable world.

On that subject, I do want to just comment on one issue that was on the news this weekend. We finalized an interim agreement with Iran—the P5-plus-1, which includes the United States, entered into an agreement with Iran—that allows us to have the time and space to negotiate the more comprehensive deal that could solve diplomatically what has been the long-running concern around Iran's nuclear programs.

I just want to emphasize that this interim agreement is the result of concerted international action—including unprecedented sanctions—that brought Iran to the table and allows us now to halt their program as we enter into intensive discussions around what would be a sustainable, comprehensive, long-term deal. It's going to be difficult, it's going to be challenging, but ultimately, this is how diplomacy should work.

If Iran is willing to walk through the door of opportunity that's presented to them, then I have no doubt that it can open up extraordinary opportunities for Iran and their people. If they fail to walk through this door of opportunity, then we are in position to reverse any interim agreement and put in place additional pressure to make sure that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon.

My preference is for peace and diplomacy, and this is one of the reasons why I've sent a message to Congress that now is not the time for us to impose new sanctions; now is the time for us to allow the diplomats and technical experts to do their work. We will be able to monitor and verify whether or not the interim agreement is being followed through on, and if it is not, we'll be in a strong position to respond. But what we want to do is give diplomacy a chance and give peace a chance, and I am confident that I speak not just for myself, but for our P5-plus-1 partners, that they think this is an opportunity that we should not miss.

But on this and a wide range of efforts around the world, we're fortunate to have such an outstanding partner as Spain and Prime Minister Rajoy. We're very grateful for his visit. We're grateful for the friendship between Spain and the United States.

I should note that the World Cup is coming up. Spain is the defending titleholder, but the United States is rapidly improving—[*laughter*]—and so perhaps if the Prime Minister has some advice for us in terms of how we can win a title at some point, it would be most welcome.

But thank you so much for the visit.

Prime Minister Rajoy. Well, good afternoon. I will be giving you that advice so that you can come in second at the World Cup. [*Laughter*] And I'm sure you will understand why.

And, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for attending. I would like to start by thanking the President of the United States, who has invited me in my capacity as President of the Government of Spain to discuss different issues of common interest to the United States and to Spain.

There are a lot of things that unite us: democracy, freedom, human rights, the quest for progress, and also that we're Hispanic and 17 percent of the U.S. population is also Hispanic. And we have noted here that our relations are excellent.

Well, President Obama has summed up very well the issues that we have talked about, so I'm going to be extremely brief, and I'm going to give you my vision on four points. First of all, the economy—the euro zone economy and the Spanish economy—I talked to the President about the fact that a little more than a year ago, we used to talk on the phone about the situation. Back then, there were doubts on the existence of the euro. It was difficult for countries in the euro zone to fund themselves because—for some countries—because the

risk premium was very high. There was talk about some countries needing to be bailed out, among them Spain. Growth was low, unemployment was high, and there were competitiveness problems.

But today, the situation is completely different. There are no longer doubts on the existence of the euro. There is no longer talk about a bailout, risk premiums are down, and some euro zone countries are starting to grow. And we're starting to see some sort of solution to the problem of unemployment.

Well, we also talked with the U.S. President on the reforms that have been undertaken in Spain over the past 2 years, which were essential for recovery to take place. We've said that these reforms required a huge effort on the part of citizens and also that the EU is taking steps in the right direction. So we now have a more optimistic vision of the situation in Spain, although, a lot remains to be done still.

After 11 straight quarters of negative growth, we saw growth during the third quarter of 2013—0.1 percent—and we have the latest figures from today from the Ministry of the Economy. During the fourth quarter, the economy improved by 0.3 percent. And unemployment, however, remains the main problem. But the latest figures both on unemployment and on social security enrollment are very encouraging. Next year, Spain will grow, and jobs will be created, but we will still have to work with determination, perseverance, and courage. And I'm sure that the vast majority of Spaniards understand that this effort was necessary and it will have an impact on the future.

And I'm going to be very brief on my second point. I would like to mention the bilateral relations—the economic bilateral relations between the United States and Spain. The United States is the first investor in Spain, and Spain also invests heavily in the United States; it's the third country Spain invests in. So now is an excellent time for U.S. investors to see the potential that Spain offers.

We've also talked about trade between our two countries; it has increased. Spain's exports have increased. And I would like to mention the free trade agreement that is currently being negotiated between the United States and the European Union. It's extremely important. Both our territories make up 50 percent of GDP. It's probably the freest, the largest trade area, and it can set trade rules for the future. So I'd like to say that Spain is going to fully support that trade agreement between the United States and the European Union.

Now I would like to make also a comment on our security and defense relations, which are going through very good times, and I'm sure that will continue to be the case. On foreign policy, I think that we see things in the same way—what's happening in North Africa and in the Middle East—and we will cooperate with the international bodies where these issues were dealt with in a quick and intelligent way.

And lastly, I would like to speak about Latin America. It's very important for us. It's a continent that—where we're seeing more democracy, more freedom, more human rights, and progress; although, still a lot remains to be done. For us, it will continue to be a foreign policy priority. A lot of South—Latin Americans go to Spain, and vice versa. And we will work together to help our brothers there.

President Obama. We have time for a couple questions.

Stephen [Stephen Collinson, Agence France-Presse].

Former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates/U.S. Military Operations in Afghanistan

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Could I ask you to respond to Secretary Gates's statement, where by the end of 2011, you had lost faith in the Afghan surge strategy and its commander? And are you at all irked that this book came out during your Presidency and while American troops are still at war? And if I may briefly ask the Prime Minister, does Spain remain concerned about NSA operations in your country?

President Obama. Secretary Gates did an outstanding job for me as Secretary of Defense. As he notes, he and I and the rest of my national security team came up with a strategy for Afghanistan that was the right strategy and we are continuing to execute. And I think that

what's important is that we got the policy right, but that this is hard and it always has been. Whenever you've got men and women that you are sending into harm's way after having already made enormous investments in blood and treasure in another country, then part of your job as Commander in Chief is to sweat the details on it and to recognize that there is enormous sacrifices that are being made, and you're constantly asking yourselves questions about how you can improve the strategy.

The good news is, is that because of that strategy that we came up with, by the end of this year, we will have completed combat operations in Afghanistan. We are in a position to continue to assist the Afghan people in making sure that they have a stable country that is working on behalf of the Afghan people and that it is a good partner with us.

But war is never easy, and I think that all of us who have been involved in that process understand that. But I want to emphasize that during his tenure here, Secretary Gates was an outstanding Secretary of Defense, a good friend of mine, and I'll always be grateful for his service.

One last thing I want to say about this, though, Steve, just as I have continued to have faith in our mission, most importantly, I've had unwavering confidence in our troops and their performance in some of the most difficult situations imaginable. That job is not yet done. And I do think it's important for Americans to recognize that we still have young men and women in harm's way, along with coalition partners who are continuing to make sacrifices, and we need to see this job all the way through. And that is going to be the case through the end of this year, and we're going to continue to have significant interest in the region for years to come.

Prime Minister Rajoy. Well, regarding the question of the NSA and whether we're concerned by it, the Government of Spain has had a fluid contact with the U.S. diplomatic representation in Spain and also at other levels and has deemed that the explanations were satisfactory.

Global Economic Stabilization Efforts/Euro Zone Economies

[*At this point, a reporter asked a question in Spanish, and no translation was provided. President Obama and Prime Minister Rajoy then responded as follows.*]

President Obama. Mariano.

Prime Minister Rajoy. Now, actually, that was two questions in one. For Spain, unemployment is still the most serious problem, as it is also for other European countries. And the goal of my policy over the last 2 years has been to lay the foundations to resolve the problem of unemployment. If we hadn't used the policy of fiscal consolidation and structural reform and we hadn't reformed our financial sector and brought our public accounts back to health, it would be—would have been impossible to create jobs. So you first have to do that to create jobs.

And the figures that we have, well, no, they're not satisfactory, but they are a change. It's the best figure over the past 5 or 6 years. At the end of 2013, there were fewer people unemployed than there were at the end of 2012. And I'm sure that in 2014, jobs will be created in Spain and in the rest of the EU as well.

Now, the question on succession and whether it's an obstacle to growth, well, let me be frank: Political instability doesn't help. Division doesn't help. Uncertainty doesn't help. But that's something that we all—we will overcome, because it will be very bad for everyone if something like that took place, especially for the smallest of the units. But I'm sure that we are going to act with common sense, because in today's world, bigger is better: Bigger is better for having better public services, for being able to pay debts, and so on. And smaller is worse.

President Obama. Well, I think Mariano captured the challenges that we've all faced in the wake of the original crisis back in 2007, 2008. The first step is to stabilize the economy, and that means making sure that the banking sectors, the financial systems, are stable. And different countries were in different positions. For Spain, that was a greater challenge to set-

tle down the markets, to make sure that they had access to those markets. And so the steps that had been taken for structural reform and fiscal consolidation were necessary predicates for growth.

And by the way, those are never the most politically popular steps to take, but they're often necessary. I think we also agree that at this stage, the most important thing is growth and to bring down an unemployment rate that is too high around the world and has especially hit countries like Spain hard.

And my view is, is that Europe as a whole has the ability to grow faster. For countries that are still engaged in necessary fiscal consolidation, they may not be able to drive demand in Europe, but there are also surplus countries that can be doing more to increase demand the continent as a whole. And when you combine those with the structural reforms that are taking place, as well as potential trade agreements that can expand markets for businesses, small and large, on either side of the Atlantic, then you have a potential recipe for increased growth and a virtuous cycle that can lead ultimately to greater prosperity, lower unemployment, higher wages. And I think that's the objective of any government's economic policies, is how does it translate into improved living standards and improved opportunities for ordinary people? I know that that's the goal of the President of Spain, and that's my goal as President of the United States, and hopefully, we can work together to accomplish that.

I do think that the work that's been done on strengthening banking union and banking regulations, financial sector regulations across the continent can also make significant contribution not just in giving markets assurance, but also continuing to guard against some future vulnerabilities that may arise in the euro zone area. And so I want to continue to encourage the work that's been done on that front.

But we feel much more optimistic about Europe's prospects this year than we were last year, and we're very optimistic about the prospects for Spain not just next year, but in the years to come. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:17 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, USA, former commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan. Prime Minister Rajoy spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the Resignation of Assistant to the President and Cabinet Secretary Danielle C. Gray

January 13, 2014

Ten years ago, Danielle Gray put a promising legal career on hold to join my campaign for the U.S. Senate, and I will always be grateful that she did. Over the past decade, I've come to rely on Danielle's brilliant legal mind, her mastery of complex policy, her sense of humor, her fundamental decency, and her passionate, persistent understanding of the hopes, dreams, and challenges of the Americans we have the privilege to fight for. Danielle has been instrumental in shaping policies that have helped grow our economy and create good jobs, ensuring that our veterans get the economic opportunities they deserve, helping to craft my American Jobs Act proposal, and confirming two extraordinarily qualified women to the Supreme Court. And over the past year, as Cabinet Secretary and a close adviser to me, she has not only helped make sure every agency in the Federal Government remains focused on giving hard-working Americans a fair shot at opportunity, but that our policies reflect the values we have always fought for. While I will miss Danielle, I will continue to rely on her counsel, and I look forward to watching her help push our legal system and our country in the direction of justice for years to come.

Statement on Representative George Miller III's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
January 13, 2014

George Miller has proudly represented the people of California in Congress for nearly 40 years, and he has spent his career fighting to grow and strengthen the middle class. Because of his tireless efforts, our air and water are cleaner, our workers' rights are better protected, more young people can afford to go to college, and more working families can make ends meet. George was a chief author of the first bill I signed into law, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. His decades-long fight to bring quality, affordable health insurance to millions of Americans made him an indispensable partner in developing and passing the Affordable Care Act. And he continues to fight for our shared belief that a minimum wage should be a wage you can live on. Michelle and I thank Congressman Miller for his service and leadership, and we wish him, his wife Cynthia, and their children and grandchildren the very best in the future.

NOTE: The statement referred to George and Stephen Miller, sons of Rep. Miller.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Robert L. Wilkins as a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
January 13, 2014

I am pleased that the Senate has confirmed Judge Robert Wilkins to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Judge Wilkins spent a decade as a public defender, providing legal representation to individuals who could not afford an attorney, as well as 8 years in private practice. His accomplishments outside the courtroom include helping to establish the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. In 2010, I nominated Judge Wilkins to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, and since being confirmed without opposition by the Senate to that position, he has applied the law with the utmost impartiality and integrity. I am confident that he will continue to do so on the DC Circuit. Judge Wilkins is the fourth of my nominees to be confirmed to this important court, which now has a full bench to render justice fairly and swiftly.

NOTE: The statement referred to Srikanth Srinivasan, Patricia A. Millett, and Cornelia T.L. "Nina" Pillard, judges, U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters
January 14, 2014

The President. All right, well, I'm glad to be able to pull together my Cabinet for the first official Cabinet meeting of the year, and I want to wish everybody a wonderful new year.

We've got a lot to do in 2014. As I've said before, this is going to be a year of action. We've seen the economy improve. We want to maximize the pace of our recovery, but most importantly, we want to make sure that every American is able to benefit from that recovery; that we're not leaving anybody behind and everybody is getting a fair shot.

I was very pleased to see the House and the Senate agree to a budget and to put forward a bill that will fund our Government at levels that allow us to take some important steps to provide the services and the help that Americans need and American families need in order

to get ahead in this economy. And so I would urge that Congress pass that funding measure as quickly as possible so that all these agencies have some certainty around their budgets.

And Congress is going to have some additional work over the course of the next several weeks; specifically, it's important that they do something about unemployment insurance. Although we've seen improvements in the economy and job creation in our economy, I think we all know that there are a lot of hard-working Americans out there who are desperately looking for a job, and unemployment insurance is not only good for them and necessary for them, but it's also good for our economy as a whole and will actually accelerate our growth if we go ahead and get that done. We know that we need to get immigration reform done, a major piece of unfinished business from last year.

So Congress is going to be busy, and I'm looking forward to working with Democrats and Republicans, House Members and Senate Members, to try to continue to advance the economic recovery and to provide additional ladders of opportunity for everybody. But one of the things that I'll be emphasizing in this meeting is the fact that we are not just going to be waiting for legislation in order to make sure that we're providing Americans the kind of help that they need. I've got a pen, and I've got a phone. And I can use that pen to sign Executive orders and take executive actions and administrative actions that move the ball forward in helping to make sure our kids are getting the best education possible and making sure that our businesses are getting the kind of support and help they need to grow and advance, to make sure that people are getting the skills that they need to get those jobs that our businesses are creating.

And I've got a phone that allows me to convene Americans from every walk of life—nonprofits, businesses, the private sector, universities—to try to bring more and more Americans together around what I think is a unifying theme: making sure that this is a country where if you work hard, you can make it.

And so one of the things that I'm going to be talking to my Cabinet about is, how do we use all the tools available to us, not just legislation, in order to advance a mission that I think unifies all Americans: the belief that everybody has got to take responsibility, everybody has got to work hard, but if you do, that you can support a family and meet the kinds of obligations that you have to yourself and your family, but also to your communities and to your Nation.

We're already seeing some examples of that. In fact, this week, I'll be traveling tomorrow down to North Carolina to talk about a manufacturing innovation hub that we initiated, talked about in our State of the Union last year. It's going to be moving forward. And there are a lot of folks down in North Carolina who are excited, because it's a perfect example of the kind of public-private partnership that can really make a difference in growing our economy faster and creating the kinds of good-paying jobs that help people get ahead.

I'll also be pulling together university presidents from all across the country to talk about how we can make college education more accessible to more young people around this country. And we're going to be bringing in CEOs from across the country to also have a conversation about commitments they can make to start hiring the long-term unemployed, people who oftentimes have terrific skills, have a great work ethic, have wonderful experience, but because of the misfortune of having been laid off or lost their jobs in the depths of a extremely severe recession, have been out of work long enough that now we're finding, it's very hard for them to just get in the door and make their case to an employer; that there's some screening that's taking place for people who have been out of work for more than a month or two and it makes it harder for them to get the kind of shot that they need. And we're going to try to work with CEOs to make a pledge that we're going to take a second look at these Americans who are very eager to get back to work and have the capacity to do so, but aren't getting the kind of shot that they need.

So overall, the message to my Cabinet—and that will be amplified in our State of the

Union—is that we need all hands on deck to build on the recovery that we're already seeing. The economy is improving, but it could be improving even faster. A lot of people are doing better than they were in the depths of the recession, but there are still a lot of folks who need help. And I am absolutely confident that in 2014, if we're all working in the same direction and not worrying so much about political points, but worrying much more about getting the job done, that we can see a lot of improvement this year, and people will look back on 2014 as a year in which we didn't just turn the corner in the aggregate for the economy, but everybody started feeling a little more optimistic about our futures.

So I'm looking forward to the discussion. And with that, I'm going to kick you all out. [*Laughter*]

Review of U.S. Signals Intelligence and Electronic Surveillance Programs

Q. How do you think the NSA is going to affect your year this year? And how will you address it on Friday?

The President. Thank you, guys.

Q. Have you finished your review on the NSA?

The President. Actually, it's getting close. So I'll have quite a bit to say about that very soon.

Q. How will that affect your year this year?

The President. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Remarks Honoring the 2013 National Basketball Association Champion Miami Heat
January 14, 2014

The President. Hello! Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. Welcome to the White House. Actually, for these guys, it is welcome back to the White House, after being back-to-back world champions, the Miami Heat.

[*At this point, an audience member hollered.*]

[*Laughter*] Now, one of the cool things about this job is welcoming championship sports teams from across the sporting world to the White House. And usually, people enjoy coming to the White House. I have to say, I've never seen folks more excited than the Heat when they came last year. [*Laughter*] I mean, LeBron was so pumped up I thought he was going to give me a hug and knock me over, like the guy in "SportsCenter" who hit the half-court shot. But it was wonderful to see them then. It wonderful to see them back.

We've got some outstanding Members of Congress who are big fans of the Heat. They're from both parties, because we all know nothing brings people together like the Miami Heat. [*Laughter*] It's a—across the NBA there's just a unifying—[*laughter*]—sense about the Heat.

I want to congratulate Coach Spoelstra for the outstanding work that he does; legendary team president, Pat Riley, for his outstanding leadership; and all the coaches and players, members of the staff and crew to make a championship season. This group has now won twice, but it's gone to the finals three times. And sometimes, it feels like they're still fighting for a little respect. I can relate to that. [*Laughter*]

Last season, the Heat put together one of the most dominating regular seasons ever by a defending champion. They won a team record 66 games. At what point, they won 27 games straight, the second longest winning streak ever, extraordinarily impressive, almost as impressive as the Bulls' 72-win season. [*Laughter*] Riley and I were reminiscing about those Knicks years. [*Laughter*]

But as these guys know, winning a title is never easy. In the playoffs, the Pacers put them through seven bruising games. In the finals, the Spurs showed us all that they've got an awful lot of life left in them and one of the greatest players of all time and one of the greatest coaches of all time. In fact, San Anto-

nio had the series all but wrapped up in game six. As you will recall, Miami was down five points, less than 30 seconds to go. The last 122 times that happened in the playoffs, the team that was down lost 122 times.

And then they brought out the ropes. And then Ray Allen saw them bring out the ropes. [*Laughter*] And with 5 seconds left, Chris Bosh gets an incredible offensive rebound, passes it out to Ray; Ray is backing up, he's got to jump forward; hits one of the most iconic shots of all time. And then he added a few choice words about the ropes, which we cannot—[*laughter*]—which we cannot repeat here. But, Ray, I do want you to know that when you say those things on the court, like, people can read your lips, right? [*Laughter*] You do understand that?

Guard Ray Allen. Yes.

The President. Okay. All right.

So the Heat won game six, went on to win game seven, their third title in eight seasons. LeBron James earned his second straight Finals MVP to go along with four regular season MVPs in 5 years. Dwyane Wade, warrior that he is, played through a pair of injured knees, always came through when it mattered. Chris Bosh was there playing great defense, getting the rebound, hitting a clutch shot. Everybody on this team participated.

And from Ray's big shot to the contributions of Mario Chalmers, Shane Battier, Udonis Haslem, Birdman, Birdman's tattoos—[*laughter*]—Birdman's mohawk—[*laughter*]—the Heat showed us the kind of heart and determination it takes to be a champion.

And they also showed what it—what heart means off the court. Last year, they raised close to $2 million for local charities. Before this event, they met with some of our amazing wounded warriors over at Walter Reed, and we're proud to have some of those wounded warriors here in the audience here today. Honoring our troops isn't just something that they do when they come to the White House, it's something they do all year round with their Heat Home Strong initiative. And Pat Riley, I know, has been hugely invested in this, and we talked a little bit about this. His incredible admiration for our men and women in uniform, but more concretely, his willingness to do something about how we support them, I think, is a credit to the entire organization.

On top of that, Coach Spoelstra serves as a member of the NBA Fit team to encourage healthy habits among young people. I know Michelle is thankful for the support that many of these players have given to her "Let's Move!" initiative. I heard that all of you are getting ready to embarrass yourselves by singing some karaoke for Shane's education foundation. [*Laughter*] Just leave Al Green to the pros, people. [*Laughter*]

So bottom line is, outstanding athletes, outstanding organization, outstanding team, but also outstanding members of their community. And so we're very proud to have them back. We wish them great luck for the rest of the season, unless they're playing the Bulls. [*Laughter*]

And with that, I think we should take a picture, but we should make it quick before one of these guys starts yelling at Mario. [*Laughter*] All right. I mean, sometimes, it's just a bad pass, guys. It's not Mario's fault. [*Laughter*] Now, but—I've got your back, man.

Head Coach Erik Spoelstra. Well, this is a great honor for the entire Miami Heat family. It does not get old. Okay? And what this is, is we put this together before the playoff run last year, and it was a covenant between all of us that we signed, that we would commit to each other, all the way to the end. So——

The President. This is outstanding.

Coach Spoelstra. So we have marks for each win, and it signified each player would mark the win for that game, and the final one was the team one. So this one, right here, you can see "44" and your name right there.

The President. There you go. It was added to it. You know, you guys are winning me over a little bit. [*Laughter*]

Coach Spoelstra. Getting there. Getting there.

The President. I mean——

Coach Spoelstra. We promise we'll put together another one for you and let you mark it this year. [*Laughter*] Okay?

The President. Congratulations. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to LeBron James, Shane Battier, and Udonis Haslem, forwards, Chris Bosh and Chris "Birdman" Andersen, center-forwards, and Dwyane Wade and Mario Chalmers, guards, Miami Heat; Patrick J. Riley, president, the HEAT Group; and musician Al Green.

Statement on Representative William L. Owens's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
January 14, 2014

During his time in the United States Congress, Bill Owens has been a forceful advocate for the people of New York. Bill has helped create jobs and economic opportunity for hard-working North Country families and farmers. And as a proud veteran of the U.S. Air Force, he has protected the interests of our men and women in uniform. Michelle and I thank Congressman Owens for his service, and we wish him, his wife Jane, and their three children the very best in the future.

Remarks at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina
January 15, 2014

The President. Hello, Raleigh! Thank you so much. Thank you. Well, it is good to be back in North Carolina. If you have a seat, go ahead and have a seat. Now, if you don't have a seat, don't. [*Laughter*]

It is good to be here at the home of the Wolfpack. I want to thank your chancellor, Randy Woodson, for the introduction and the great work that he's doing on behalf of students all across the system. I want to recognize my Secretary of Energy, Ernie Moniz, who is here. Give him a big round of applause; he's doing good work. Your Governor, Pat McCrory, is here. The mayor of Raleigh, Nancy McFarlane. The mayor of Chapel Hill, Mark Kleinschmidt. The mayor of Durham, Bill Bell. And we've got Congressman Mike McIntyre doing great work. Your Senator, Kay Hagan, couldn't be here, but I wanted to thank her publicly for the great work she's doing.

And I want to thank all the students for coming out. We're doing this event nice and early so it doesn't run up against the Wake game. I've learned a few things as President, and one of them is not to compete with college basketball down here on Tobacco Road. You don't do that.

Now, this is actually my second stop in Raleigh-Durham. I just took a tour of a company called Vacon, where workers design the drives that power everything from elevators to the giant fans that help cool buildings like this one, although I think we're kind of saving money on this one—[*laughter*]—which is the smart thing to do.

So this company is making these engines and these systems more efficient, saving businesses big bucks on energy costs, improving the environment. Those savings get passed on to customers, puts money in people's pockets. And growing companies that need the products that Vacon makes, they're benefiting enormously. So it's a good-news story. But in a global economy, that company, just like every company in America, has to keep inventing and innovating in order to stay on the cutting edge. And that's where all of you come in.

Here at NC State, you know something about innovation. You've got one of the largest undergraduate engineering programs in the country. That's worth cheering for. I'm a lawyer by training, and that's nice. But we need more engineers.

So companies like Cisco and IBM, they come to this school when they're looking to hire because of the quality of the engineering program. And over at Centennial Campus, some very smart people experiment in state-of-

the-art facilities to figure out everything from how to design better fireproof fabrics to how to better protect our computer systems.

So the reason I came here today is because we've got to do more to connect universities like NC State with companies like Vacon to make America the number-one place in the world to open new businesses and create new jobs. We want to do that here in North Carolina, and we want to do this all across America.

Now, it's been more than 5 years since a devastating recession cost this country millions of jobs, and it hurt North Carolina pretty tough. But everyone here knows that even before the recession hit, the middle class had been hitting it—getting hit on the chin for years before that. Here in North Carolina, factories were shutting their doors; jobs were getting shipped overseas. Wages and incomes were flatlining so even if you had a job, you didn't see your standard of living going up very much. Meanwhile, the cost of everything from college tuition to groceries did go up.

So when I took office, we decided to focus on the hard work of rebuilding our economy on a new foundation for growth and prosperity and to make sure that everybody had a chance to get ahead. And thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of the American people, the good news is, the economy is growing stronger. Our businesses have now created more than 8 million new jobs since we hit bottom. Because of an all-of-the-above strategy for American energy, for the first time in nearly two decades, we produce more oil here in the United States than we buy from the rest of the world. That hasn't happened in a very long time. We now generate more renewable energy than ever before, more natural gas than anybody on the planet. We're lowering energy costs, reducing pollution.

Health care costs are growing at their slowest rate in 50 years. For the first time since the 1990s, health care costs eat up a smaller chunk of our economy, and part of that, yes, has to do with the Affordable Care Act. And so over time, that means bigger paychecks for middle class families, bigger savings for companies that are looking to hire. And along with all this, since I took office, we've cut our deficits by more than half.

So we've made progress. And that's what I mean when I say this can be a breakthrough year for America. The pieces are all there to start bringing back more of the jobs that we've lost over the past decade. A lot of companies around the world are starting to talk about bringing jobs back to the United States, bringing jobs back to places like North Carolina, partly because we've got cheap energy costs, we've got the best workers in the world, we've got the best university systems in the world, and we've got the largest market in the world.

So the pieces are there to restore some of the ground that the middle class has lost in recent decades, start raising wages for American families. But it requires us to take action. This has to be a year of action.

And here in North Carolina, you're doing your part to create good jobs that pay good wages. Congress has to do its part too, because restoring the American Dream of opportunity for everyone who's willing to work for it is something that should unite the country. That shouldn't divide the country. That's what we should be aspiring to: that everybody has a shot if they're willing to work hard and take responsibility.

So in the short term, one thing Congress could do is listen to the majority of the American people and restore the unemployment insurance for Americans who need it. And just—let me just make an aside here: North Carolina still has a higher than average unemployment rate, so this is important to this State. Folks aren't looking for a handout. They're not looking for special treatment. There are a lot of people who are sending out résumés every single day, but the market—the job market is still tough in pockets around the country, and people need support, a little help, so they can look after their families while they're looking for a new job. So Congress should do the right thing and extend this vital lifeline for millions of Americans.

Of course, that's just short term. Long term, the challenge of making sure everybody who works hard can get ahead in today's economy is

so important that we can't wait for Congress to solve it. Where I can act on my own without Congress, I'm going to do so.

And today I'm here to act: to help make Raleigh-Durham and America a magnet for the good, high-tech manufacturing jobs that a growing middle class requires and that is—are going to continue to keep this country on the cutting edge.

So we've already got some success to build on. Manufacturing is a bright spot in this economy. For decades, we'd been losing manufacturing jobs. But now our manufacturers have added, over the last 4 years, more than 550,000 new jobs, including almost 80,000 manufacturing jobs in the last 5 months alone. So we want to keep that trend going. We want to build on the kind of work that's being done in places like NC State to develop technology that leads to new jobs and entire new industries.

So a little over a year ago, we launched America's first manufacturing innovation institute in Youngstown, Ohio. And what it was is a partnership; it includes companies and colleges. They came up with a joint plan. They were focusing on developing 3–D printing technology and training workers with the skills required to master that technology.

Now, that was a great start. We got one going, and some of the folks from Youngstown are here today, and we congratulate them on the great work they're doing. But here's the problem: We created one. In Germany, they've already got about 60 of these manufacturing innovation hubs. So we've got some catching up to do. I don't want the next big job-creating discovery, the research and technology to be in Germany or China or Japan. I want it to be right here in the United States of America. I want it to be right here in North Carolina.

So what I said was, in my State of the Union Address last year, I said to Congress, let's set up a network of at least 15 of these manufacturing hubs all across America, focusing on different opportunities where we can get manufacturing innovation going, create jobs, make sure that the research is tied to businesses that are actually hiring. And those synergies are going to grow the economy regionally and ultimately across the whole country.

And last summer, as part of our push to create middle class jobs, I said, you know what, let's not settle on 15, let's just go ahead and do 45. Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate introduced bills that would get this going. That's good. But they haven't passed the bills yet. So I want to encourage them to continue to pass the bills that would create 45 of these manufacturing hubs. In the meantime, I'm directing my administration to move forward where we can on our own.

So today, after almost a year of competition, I'm pleased to announce America's newest high-tech manufacturing hub—which is going to be focused on the next generation of power electronics—is going to be based right here in Raleigh, North Carolina. That's good news. That's good news. [*Applause*] So—that's good news. It's great.

So just like the hub in Youngstown, what we're calling the Next Generation Power Electronics Innovation Institute is bringing together leading companies, universities, and Federal research all together under one roof. Folks at this hub are going to develop what are called wide bandgap semiconductors.

Now, I was just schooled on all this. [*Laughter*] I'm not sure that I'm fully qualified to describe the technical elements of this. Raise your hand if you know what it is. [*Laughter*] See, we have some. [*Laughter*] For all you nonengineers out there, here's what it means in the simplest terms. Semiconductors obviously are at the heart of every piece of the electronics that we use every day: your smartphone, your television set, these days everything. Public research helped develop them decades ago, and then that research allowed commercialization, new products, new services, and obviously not only improved the economy, but greatly enhanced our lives. So we want companies to run with the ball also, but first, we've got to make sure that we're also doing the research and linking it up to those companies.

Wide bandgap semiconductors, they're special because they lose up to 90-percent less power; they can operate at higher temperatures than normal semiconductors. So that

means they can make everything from cell phones to industrial motors, to electric cars smaller, faster, cheaper. There are going to be still applications for the traditional semiconductors, but these can be focused on certain areas that will vastly improve energy efficiency, vastly improve the quality of our lives. And the country that figures out how to do this first, and the companies that figure how to do this best, they're the ones that are going to attract the jobs that come with it.

So this manufacturing hub, right here, focused in North Carolina——

Audience member. Go Pack!

The President. Go Pack! [*Applause*] This hub is going to make it easier for these wide bandgap semiconductors to go from the drawing board to the factory floor, to the store shelves—or not necessarily the store shelves, because what I just saw, for example, were these really big pieces of equipment that are attached to utility companies or help windmills translate the power they're generating actually in getting transmitted to where they're going to be finally used. It's going to bring together chip designers and manufacturers with companies like Vacon and Delphi that stand to benefit from these new technologies. And this will help big companies, but it's also going to help small companies, because they're going to be able to use equipment they otherwise wouldn't be able to afford to test and prototype new products. And of course, American workers will be able to come right here to North Carolina to learn the skills that companies are looking for. And the next generation of manufacturing will be an American revolution.

So in the coming weeks, we're going to be launching two more of these innovation hubs. I—we've already got them all planned out. One is going to focus on digital design and manufacturing; another is going to be developing lightweight metals that could transform everything from wind turbines to military vehicles. And together, they're going to help build new partnerships in areas that show potential. They'll help to lift up our communities. They'll help spark the technology and research that will create the new industries, the good jobs required for folks to punch their ticket into the middle class.

And that's what America is all about. We have always been about research, innovation, and then commercializing that research and innovation so that everybody can benefit. And then we start selling our stuff all around the world, we start exporting it. And we create good jobs, and middle class families then are able to buy the products that result from this innovation. And you get a virtuous cycle where everybody is doing better and nobody is left behind. And that's what we can do if we pull together the way those companies and universities have pulled together as part of this bid.

Now, this is going to be a long haul. We're not going to turn things around overnight. A lot of jobs were lost in the textile industry and furniture-making. But the great news is, is that ultimately, because our people are good and smart and hard-working and willing to take risks, we are going to be able to start bringing those jobs back to America. And that's what we do. When the times get tough, we don't give up. We get up. We innovate. We adapt. We keep going. We look to the future.

And I want all of you to know, North Carolina, that as long as we keep working together and fighting together and doing what it takes to widen the circle of opportunity for more Americans so nobody is left behind, if you work hard, if you are responsible, then you can go out there, get a skill, train yourself, find a job, support a family. If we work together, and that's our focus, there's nothing we can't achieve. There's no limit to how far we can go.

So congratulations, North Carolina State. Congratulations, Raleigh. Let's get to work. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:14 p.m. in the J.W. Isenhour Tennis Center.

Remarks on the Nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet To Be Administrator of the Small Business Administration
January 15, 2014

Please have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, welcome to the White House. And I am pleased to be joined by many of the people on the frontlines when it comes to creating jobs and new opportunities: America's small-business owners. And I want to thank all of them for the hard work and the sacrifice of these entrepreneurs, as well as the workers and the families across the country that have helped us pull ourselves out of one of the worst recessions in our history.

Now what we're seeing is businesses having created more than 8 million new jobs since we hit bottom. Manufacturing is growing, led by a booming auto industry. Our investments have helped bring about new technologies, more affordable energy, and are slowing health care costs, all of which are making America even more attractive for investors. And we're starting to see a lot of the jobs that had left our shores in manufacturing, for example, starting to come back, because we put ourselves in a much more competitive position.

And so all the pieces are there to bring back even more new jobs to America this year, but it's not going to happen by itself. This has to be a year of action. We've got to keep our economy growing. We've got to make sure that our working families are sharing in growth and increasing success. We've got to make sure that we're creating more good jobs that pay good wages and provide families with some measure of security. We've got to make sure that the recovery doesn't leave anybody behind.

And that's where our small businesses can help lead the way, because small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy. They create most of the country's new jobs. They're cornerstones of our communities. And they're part of the pact that America makes: the idea that if you work hard, if you take responsibility, then you can build something new. You can make something of yourself. You can leave something behind for your children. And that's the dream that brought generations of hard-working immigrants to our shores, and that's the idea that drives small-business owners to create new products and expand their businesses every single day.

And that's one of the reasons why I made small business a priority from day one when I took this office. It's why we cut taxes for small-business owners not once, but twice—not once or twice, but 18 times in my first term. Small-business owners had a real tough time in the financial crisis. When lending froze, they were the ones who were getting hit the hardest. So my administration supported record amounts of lending to small businesses through the SBA: more than $130 billion to more than 225,000 small businesses during the course of 5 years.

We made it easier for small business to compete for and win Federal contracts by eliminating unnecessary paperwork and cutting redtape and accelerating payments to small-business contractors through the QuickPay program so that they can maintain the cash flow that they need to grow their businesses and create more jobs. And so in my first term, nearly $380 billion in Federal contracts went to small business. That's almost $50 billion more than in the 4 years before I took office.

So I deeply believe in small businesses that can help to drive and continue the growth that we've already seen. And I elevated the role of the Small Business Administrator to Cabinet level to give small businesses a seat at the table when we are talking about our economic agenda. I've searched for an exceptional person to serve as the next leader of the SBA. I wanted somebody with a proven track record of helping small businesses succeed, somebody who had firsthand experience both in the private sector and the public sector who can work with us and work with me to increase growth and expand opportunity. I wanted somebody who understands entrepreneurs, and it would be even better if that somebody had actually started a business of her own.

And that's why I'm so proud to nominate Maria Contreras-Sweet to be the next Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Maria knows how hard it is to get started on a business—the grueling hours, the stress, the occasional self-doubt, although I have not yet seen self-doubt out of Maria. [*Laughter*]

She knows it herself. She's the founder of ProAmérica Bank, the first Latino-owned business bank in California in over 30 years. Its focus is small and medium-sized businesses in Latino neighborhoods. So not only did she start small businesses, but those have also been her customers, and she understands all too often that the lack of access to capital means a lack of opportunity.

As Secretary of the California Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency, Maria was the driving force behind major job creation and major public investments in infrastructure and in housing. As a consultant, she helped companies expand into the Latino market. She's a champion of women-owned and family-owned businesses. When she started her bank, she said she wanted the bank to be a place where families would come for help, "because when family businesses thrive"—and I'm quoting—"the community thrives and the economy thrives." And as someone who moved to California from Mexico as a young girl, and whose mother worked long hours to support Maria and her five siblings, she knows firsthand the challenges that working families and recent immigrants are facing.

So she understands the needs of small-business owners like herself. She knows how they can lift entire communities and ultimately how they lift our country. So as we work to keep our economy growing, Maria will be charged with looking for more ways to support small businesses: to help them get that good idea off the ground, to expand, to hire, to sell their products and ideas not only in our domestic markets, but also overseas. And I'm absolutely confident that she is going to do an outstanding job as our Small Business Administrator.

So I want to thank her for accepting this position and the challenge, and I know that she's going to be up to the task. And I want to thank her husband Ray and her three outstanding children because jobs like this turn out to be family affairs and I know that Ray is very supportive and is going to be a great partner with her in this task.

Now, Maria follows in the footsteps of two extraordinary leaders: Karen Mills, who served as Administrator of the SBA in my first term, and Jeanne Hulit, who has graciously agreed to serve as Acting Administrator after Karen stepped down last year. Together, they made it easier and faster for entrepreneurs to get loans, to win contracts, to hire more people, and the results are thriving small businesses across the country.

Some of those entrepreneurs are here today. Twenty years ago, Deb and Dan Carey wanted so bad to start their own brewing company that they sold their house to help pay for it. And with a little help from the SBA, they rented an old appliance factory, set up their equipment; they got to work. Today, the New Glarus Brewing Company is one of the top craft beermakers in Wisconsin, with more than 80 full-time employees. So Deb and Dan, where are you? You're around here somewhere. There they are, right there. [*Applause*] Good to see you again.

There's another success story here: the team behind Taylor Gourmet, a hoagie shop with locations all over DC, including one just half a block from the White House. [*Laughter*] If you're wondering why I know about this, the staff are steady customers at Taylor Gourmet, and I have tasted those tasty sandwiches. When Casey Patten and Dave Mazza moved to DC, they looked everywhere for hoagies like the ones they'd grown up with in Philly. And when they couldn't find any, they thought, we should make them ourselves. And with the help of the SBA, they opened eight shops in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. And so not only are they providing great sandwiches, but they're also creating jobs here in the area.

That's the power of small business. That's the charge of the SBA. That's the extraordinary work that Jeanne has done, and before her Karen, to help advance the agenda of people who just have a dream and are willing to put in

all the blood, sweat, and tears that they need to do in order to achieve that dream. And so when we think about our small businesses, just remember that's what keeps our communities and our country strong, and we should be doing everything in our power to help them succeed. If, here in America, you're willing to work hard and dream big, you should have your shot at success.

Jeanne's understood that, and in fact, she's going to be going back into the private sector and helping small businesses back in Maine. I told her she might have wanted to stay here until the winter is over—[*laughter*]—but she's eager to get back, and she's already stayed longer than she originally intended.

And I know this is something that Maria understands. Maria, on the way in, told me a wonderful story about how her grandmother back in Mexico, who was a migrant worker, said to her that if she worked hard and studied, stayed in school, that someday she'd be able to work in an office as a secretary and really make her proud. And she ended up being the Secretary of Health and Human—or Business Development and Transportation in California. And now she's going to be helping the folks who are following behind her achieve their dreams. That's what America is all about.

So Maria is fulfilling the vision of her grandma in ways that maybe are not entirely expected. And I'm confident that she's going to put her heart and soul into making sure that all the other people who are out there striving and trying to achieve their dreams can succeed as well. That's what this administration is about, and I'm looking forward to working with her.

So thank you very much. Give them a big round of applause.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:46 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Rafael, Francesca, and Antonio Sweet, children of Administrator-designate Contreras-Sweet; Deborah Carey, founder and president, and Dan Carey, co-owner and brewmaster, New Glarus Brewing Co.; and Casey Patten and Dave Mazza, owners, Taylor Gourmet.

Statement on Representative James P. Moran's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
January 15, 2014

In his 23 years in the United States Congress, Jim Moran has pushed to create jobs and economic opportunity for hard-working Virginians and has consistently demonstrated a commitment to growing a strong American economy. And because of Jim's leadership, our brave servicemembers and veterans are better protected, our civil service is stronger, and our air and water are cleaner and safer. Michelle and I thank Congressman Moran for his service, and we wish him and his family the very best in the future.

Directive on United States Conventional Arms Transfer Policy
January 15, 2014

Presidential Policy Directive/PPD–27

Subject: United States Conventional Arms Transfer Policy

Conventional weapons have continued to play a decisive role in armed conflict in the early 21st century and will remain legitimate instruments for the defense and security policy of responsible nations for the foreseeable future. In the hands of hostile or irresponsible state and non-state actors, however, these weapons can exacerbate international tensions, foster instability, inflict substantial damage, enable transnational organized crime, and be used to violate universal human rights. There-

fore, global conventional arms transfer patterns have significant implications for U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, and the U.S. policy for conventional arms transfer has an important role in shaping the international security environment.

United States conventional arms transfer policy supports transfers that meet legitimate security requirements of our allies and partners in support of our national security and foreign policy interests. At the same time, the policy promotes restraint, both by the United States and other suppliers, in transfers of weapons systems that may be destabilizing or dangerous to international peace and security.

Goals of U.S. Conventional Arms Transfer Policy

United States conventional arms transfer policy serves the following U.S. national security and foreign policy goals:

1. Ensuring U.S. military forces, and those of allies and partners, continue to enjoy technological superiority over potential adversaries.
2. Promoting the acquisition of U.S. systems to increase interoperability with allies and partners, lower the unit costs for all, and strengthen the industrial base.
3. Enhancing the ability of allies and partners to deter or defend themselves against aggression.
4. Encouraging the maintenance and expansion of U.S. security partnerships with those who share our interests, and regional access in areas critical to U.S. interests.
5. Promoting regional stability, peaceful conflict resolution, and arms control.
6. Preventing the proliferation of conventional weapons that could be used as delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction.
7. Promoting cooperative counterterrorism, critical infrastructure protection, and other homeland security priorities.
8. Combating transnational organized crime and related threats to national security.
9. Supporting democratic governance and other related U.S. foreign policy objectives.
10. Ensuring that arms transfers do not contribute to human rights violations or violations of international humanitarian law.

Process and Criteria Guiding U.S. Arms Transfer Decisions

Arms transfer decisions will continue to meet the requirements of applicable statutes such as the Arms Export Control Act, the Foreign Assistance Act, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, and the annual National Defense Authorization Act, as well as the requirements of all applicable export control regulations and of U.S. international commitments.

All arms transfer decisions will be guided by a set of criteria that maintains the appropriate balance between legitimate arms transfers to support U.S. national security and that of our allies and partners, and the need for restraint against the transfer of arms that would enhance the military capabilities of hostile states, serve to facilitate human rights abuses or violations of international humanitarian law, or otherwise undermine international security. This includes decisions involving the transfer of defense articles, related technical data, and defense services through direct commercial sales, government-to-government transfers, transfers of arms pursuant to U.S. assistance programs, approvals for the retransfer of arms, changes of end-use, and upgrades. More specifically, all arms transfer decisions will be consistent with relevant domestic law and international commitments and obligations, and will take into account the following criteria:

- Appropriateness of the transfer in responding to legitimate U.S. and recipient security needs.
- Consistency with U.S. regional stability interests, especially when considering transfers involving power projection

capability, anti-access and area denial capability, or introduction of a system that may foster increased tension or contribute to an arms race.

- The impact of the proposed transfer on U.S. capabilities and technological advantage, particularly in protecting sensitive software and hardware design, development, manufacturing, and integration knowledge.
- The degree of protection afforded by the recipient country to sensitive technology and potential for unauthorized third-party transfer, as well as in-country diversion to unauthorized uses.
- The risk of revealing system vulnerabilities and adversely affecting U.S. operational capabilities in the event of compromise.
- The risk that significant change in the political or security situation of the recipient country could lead to inappropriate end-use or transfer of defense articles.
- The degree to which the transfer supports U.S. strategic, foreign policy, and defense interests through increased access and influence, allied burden sharing, and interoperability.
- The human rights, democratization, counterterrorism, counterproliferation, and nonproliferation record of the recipient, and the potential for misuse of the export in question.
- The likelihood that the recipient would use the arms to commit human rights abuses or serious violations of international humanitarian law, retransfer the arms to those who would commit human rights abuses or serious violations of international humanitarian law, or identify the United States with human rights abuses or serious violations of international humanitarian law.
- The impact on U.S. industry and the defense industrial base, whether or not the transfer is approved.
- The availability of comparable systems from foreign suppliers.
- The ability of the recipient to field effectively, support, and appropriately employ the requested system in accordance with its intended end-use.
- The risk of adverse economic, political, or social impact within the recipient nation and the degree to which security needs can be addressed by other means.

Supporting Arms Control and Arms Transfer Restraint

A critical element of U.S. conventional arms transfer policy is to promote control, restraint, and transparency of arms transfers. The United States will continue its participation in the U.N. Register of Conventional Arms and the U.N. Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Spending, in the absence of an international legally binding treaty that requires such transparency measures. The United States will continue to urge universal participation in the U.N. Register and encourage states reporting to the Register to include military holdings, procurement through national production, and model or type information for transfers, thereby providing a more complete picture of change in a nation's military capabilities each year. The United States will also continue to examine the scope of items covered under the Register to ensure it meets current U.S. national security concerns. Additionally, the United States will support regional initiatives to enhance transparency in conventional arms.

The United States will continue its participation in the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, which began operations in 1996 and is designed to prevent destabilizing accumulations of conventional arms and related dual-use goods and technologies. By encouraging transparency, consultation, and, where appropriate, national policies of restraint, the Arrangement fosters greater responsibility and accountability in transfers of arms and dual-use goods and technologies. We

will continue to use the Wassenaar Arrangement to promote shared national policies of restraint against the acquisition of armaments and sensitive dual-use goods and technologies for military end-uses by states whose behavior is a cause for serious concern.

The United States will also continue vigorous support for current arms control and confidence-building efforts to constrain the demand for destabilizing weapons and related technology. The United States recognizes that such efforts bolster stability in a variety of ways, ultimately decreasing the demand for arms.

The United States will not authorize any transfer if it has actual knowledge at the time of authorization that the transferred arms will be used to commit: genocide; crimes against humanity; grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949; serious violations of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949; attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians who are legally protected from attack or other war crimes as defined in 18 U.S.C. 2441.

Also, the United States will exercise unilateral restraint in the export of arms in cases where such restraint will be effective or is necessitated by overriding national interests. Such restraint will be considered on a case-by-case basis in transfers involving states whose behavior is a cause for serious concern, where the United States has a substantial lead in weapon technology, where the United States restricts exports to preserve its military edge or regional stability, where the United States has no fielded countermeasures, or where the transfer of weapons raises concerns about undermining international peace and security, serious violations of human rights law, including serious acts of gender-based violence and serious acts of violence against women and children, serious violations of international humanitarian law, terrorism, transnational organized crime, or indiscriminate use.

Finally, the United States will work bilaterally and multilaterally to assist other suppliers in developing effective export control mechanisms to support responsible export control policies.

Supporting Responsible U.S. Transfers

The United States Government will provide support for proposed U.S. exports that are consistent with this policy. This support will include, as appropriate, such steps as: tasking our overseas mission personnel to support overseas marketing efforts of U.S. companies bidding on defense contracts; actively involving senior government officials in promoting transfers that are of particular importance to the United States; and supporting official Department of Defense participation in international air and trade exhibitions when the Secretary of Defense, in accordance with existing law, determines such participation to be in the national interest and notifies the Congress. The United States will also continue to pursue efforts to streamline security cooperation with our allies and partners, and in the conduct of conventional arms transfer policy and security cooperation policy, the United States Government will take all available steps to hasten the ultimate provision of conventional arms and security assistance.

This Directive supersedes Presidential Decision Directive/NSC–34, dated February 10, 1995.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this directive.

Remarks on Expanding College Opportunity
January 16, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. Welcome to the White House, everybody. And let me begin by thanking Troy and sharing his remarkable story. I could not be more inspired by what he's accomplished and can't wait to see what he's going to accomplish in the future.

My wife, it's hard to speak after her. [*Laughter*] The—we were in the back, and Gene Sperling, who did extraordinary work putting this whole summit together, said, "Everybody is so excited that Michelle is here." [*Laughter*] I said, well, what about me? [*Laughter*] But you should be excited, her being here, because she brings a passion and a body of experience and a passion to this issue that is extraordinary. And I couldn't be prouder of the work she's already done and the work I know that she's going to keep on doing around these issues.

She did leave one thing out of her speech, and that is, it's her birthday tomorrow. [*Applause*] So I want everybody to just keep that in mind.

Now, we are here for one purpose: We want to make sure more young people have the chance to earn a higher education. And in the 21st-century economy, we all understand it's never been more important.

The good news is, is that our economy is steadily growing and strengthening after the worst recession in a generation. So we've created more than 8 million new jobs. Manufacturing is growing, led by a booming auto industry. Thanks to some key public investments in advances like affordable energy and research and development, what we've seen is not only an energy revolution in this country that bodes well for our future, but in areas like health care, for example, we've slowed the growth of health care costs in ways that a lot of people wouldn't have anticipated as recently as 5 or 10 years ago.

So there are a lot of good things going on in the economy. And businesses are starting to invest. In fact, what we're seeing are businesses overseas starting to say, instead of outsourcing, let's insource back into the U.S.

All that bodes well for our future. Here's the thing though: We don't grow just for the sake of growth. We grow so that it translates into a growing middle class, people getting jobs, people being able to support their families, and people being able to pass something on to the next generation. We want to restore the essential promise of opportunity and upward mobility that's at the heart of America, the notion that if you work hard, you can get ahead, you can improve your situation in life, you can make something of yourself, the same essential story that Troy so eloquently told about himself.

And the fact is, it's been getting harder to do that for a lot of people. It is harder for folks to start in one place and move up that ladder, and that was true long before the recession hit. And that's why I've said that in 2014, we have to consider this a year of action, not just to grow the economy, not just to increase GDP, not just to make sure that corporations are profitable and the stock market's doing well and the financial system is stable. We've also got to make sure that that growth is broad based and that everybody has a chance to access that growth and take advantage of it. We've got to make sure that we're creating new jobs and that the wages and benefits that go along with those jobs can support a family. We have to make sure that there are new ladders of opportunity into the middle class and that those ladders—the rungs on those ladders are solid and accessible for more people.

Now, I'm going to be working with Congress where I can to accomplish this, but I'm also going to act on my own if Congress is deadlocked. I've got a pen to take executive actions where Congress won't, and I've got a telephone to rally folks around the country on this mission.

And today is a great example of how, without a whole bunch of new legislation, we can advance this agenda. We've got philanthropists and business leaders here. We've got leaders of innovative non-for-profits. We've got college presidents, from State universities and historically Black colleges to Ivy League universities and community colleges. And today more than 100 colleges and 40 organizations are announcing new commitments to help more young people not only go to, but graduate from college. And that's an extraordinary accomplishment, and we didn't pass a bill to do it.

Everybody here is participating, I believe, because you know that college graduation has never been more valuable than it is today. Unemployment for Americans with a college degree is more than a third lower than the nation-

al average; incomes, twice as high as those without a high school diploma. College is not the only path to success. We've got to make sure that more Americans of all age are getting the skills that they need to access the jobs that are out there right now. But more than ever, a college degree is the surest path to a stable, middle class life.

And higher education speaks to something more than that. The premise that we're all created equal is the opening line in our American story. And we don't promise equal outcomes; we've strived to deliver equal opportunity: the idea that success does not depend on being born into wealth or privilege, it depends on effort and merit. You can be born into nothing and work your way into something extraordinary. And to a kid that goes to college, maybe like Michelle, the first in his or her family, that means everything.

And the fact is, is if we hadn't made a commitment as a country to send more of our people to college, Michelle, me, maybe a few of you would not be here today. My grandfather wasn't rich, but when he came home from the war he got the chance to study on the GI bill. I grew up with a single mom. She had me when she was 18 years old. There are a lot of circumstances where that might have waylaid her education for good. But there were structures in place that allowed her then to go on and get a Ph.D. Michelle's dad was a shift worker at the city waterplant; mom worked as a secretary. They didn't go to college. But there were structures in place that allowed Michelle to take advantage of those opportunities.

Now, as Michelle mentioned, our parents and grandparents made sure we knew that we'd have to work for it, that nobody was going to hand us something, that education was not a passive enterprise, it's—you just tip your head over and somebody pours education into your ear. You've got to work for it. And I've told the story of my mother: When I was living overseas, she'd wake me up before dawn to do correspondence courses in English before I went to the other school. I wasn't that happy about it. But with that hard work—but also with scholarships, also with student loans, and with support programs in place—we were able to go to some of the best colleges in the country even though we didn't have a lot of money. Every child in America should have the same chance.

So over the last 5 years, we've worked hard in a variety of ways to improve these mechanisms to get young people where they need to be and to knock down barriers that are preventing them from getting better prepared for the economies that they're going to face. We've called for clearer, higher standards in our schools, and 45 States and the District of Columbia have answered that call so far. We've set a goal of training 100,000 new math and science teachers over the next 10 years, and the private sector has already committed to help train 40,000. We've taken new steps to help students stay in school, and today, the high school dropout rate is the lowest it has been in 40 years, something that's rarely advertised. The dropout rate among Hispanic students, by the way, has been cut in half over the last decade.

But we still have to hire more good teachers and pay them better. We still have to do more training and development and ensure that the curriculums are ones that maximize the chances for student success. When young people are properly prepared in high school, we've got to make sure that they can afford to go to college. So we took on a student loan system that was giving billions of dollars of taxpayer dollars to big banks, and we said, let's give that money directly to students. As a consequence, we were able to double the grant aid that goes to millions of students. And today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before.

So we've made progress there, but as I've discussed with some of you, we're still going to have to make sure that rising tuition doesn't price the middle class out of a college education. The Government is not going to be able to continually subsidize a system in which higher education inflation is going up faster than health care inflation. So I've laid out a plan to bring down costs and make sure that

students are not saddled with debt before they even start out in life.

Even after all these steps that we've taken over the last 5 years, we still have a long way to go to unlock the doors of higher education to more Americans and especially lower income Americans. We're going to have to make sure they're ready to walk through those doors. The added value of a college diploma has nearly doubled since Michelle and I were undergraduates. Unfortunately, today, only 30 percent of low-income students enroll in college right after high school, and far worse, by their midtwenties, only 9 percent earn a bachelor's degree.

So if we as a nation can expand opportunity and reach out to those young people and help them not just go to college, but graduate from college or university, it could have a transformative effect. There is this huge cohort of talent that we're not tapping.

Now, what this meeting today tells me is we've got dedicated citizens across the country who are ready to stand up and meet this challenge. And what I want to really do is highlight some of the commitments that have been made here today. So we know that not enough low-income students are taking the steps required to prepare for college. That's why I'm glad the University of Chicago, my neighbor, and the place where Michelle and I both worked in the past, is announcing a $10 million College Success Initiative that will reach 10,000 high schools over the next 5 years. It's why iMentor, a mentoring program that began 15 years ago with just 49 students in the South Bronx, has committed to matching 20,000 new students with mentoring in more than 20 States over the next 5 years.

We also know that too many students don't apply to the schools that are right for them. They may sometimes underestimate where they could succeed, where they could go. There may be a mismatch in terms of what their aspirations are and the nature of what's offered at the school that's close by. And they kind of assume, well, that's my only option. So UVA, for example, is going to experiment with new ways to contact high-achieving, low-income students directly, encourage them to apply. Organizations like the College Board are going to work with colleges to make it easier for students to apply to more schools for free.

I know sometimes for those of you in university administrations, the perception may be that a hundred-dollar application fee is not a big deal. But for a lot of these students, that's enough of a barrier that they just don't end up applying.

Number three, we know that when it comes to college advising and preparing for tests like the ACT and the SAT, low-income kids are not on a level playing field. We call these standardized tests; they're not standardized. Malia and Sasha, by the time they're in seventh grade at Sidwell School here, are already getting all kinds of advice and this and that and the other. The degree of preparation that many of the—our kids here are getting in advance of actually taking this test tilts the playing field. It's not fair. And it's gotten worse.

I was telling Michelle, when I was taking the SAT, I just barely remembered to bring a pencil. I mean, that's how much preparation I did. [*Laughter*] But the truth of the matter is, is that we don't have a level playing field when it comes to so-called standardized tests. So we've got a young man here today named Lawrence Harris who knows this better than most. Lawrence went to the University of Georgia, and like a lot of first-generation college students, it wasn't easy for him. He had to take remedial classes. He had to work two part-time jobs to make ends meet. At one point, he had to leave school for a year while he helped support his mom and his baby brother. Those are the kinds of just day-to-day challenges that a lot of these young people with enormous talent are having to overcome. Now, he stuck with it. He graduated.

But now he's giving back. He's made it his mission to help other young people like him graduate, as a college adviser at Clarke Central High School in Athens, Georgia. And today the National College Advising Corps, the program that placed Lawrence in Clarke Central, is announcing plans to add 129 more advisers who

will serve more than 80,000 students over the next 3 years.

Finally, we know that once low-income students arrive on campus—Michelle, I think, spoke eloquently to her own personal experience on this—they often learn that even if they were at the top of their high school class, they still have a lot of catching up to do with respect to some of their peers in the classroom. Bunker Hill Community College is addressing this by giving more incoming students the chance to start catching up over the summer before their freshman year. And we've got 22 States and the District of Columbia who have joined together in a commitment to dramatically increase the number of students who complete college-level math and English their first year.

So these are just a sampling of the more than 100 commitments that your organizations and colleges are making here today. And that's an extraordinary first step. But we've got more colleges and universities than this around the country. We've got more business leaders around the country and philanthropies around the country. And so we have to think of this as just the beginning; we want to do something like this again, and we want even more colleges and universities and businesses and non-for-profits to take part.

For folks who are watching this who were not able be here today, we want you here next time. Start thinking about your commitments now. We want you to join us. For those who were able to make commitments today, I want to thank you for doing your part to make better the life of our country. Because what you're doing here today means that there are a bunch of young people, like Troy and like Michelle and like me, who suddenly may be able to see a whole new world open up before—that they didn't realize was there.

So I'll end with a great story that, I think, speaks to this. There's a former teacher here today named Nick Ehrmann. Where's Nick? All right, so here's Nick right here. Five years ago, Nick founded a New York City nonprofit called Blue Engine, and they recruit recent college graduates to work as teaching assistants in public high schools that serve low-income communities, teaming up to help students build the skills they need to enter college ready for college.

The first group of students to work with those teaching assistants are seniors now. One of them, Estiven Rodriguez, where—who also is here today. Where is he? There he is, good-looking young guy right here. [*Laughter*] Could not speak a word of English when he moved to the United States from the Dominican Republic at age of 9. Didn't speak much more English by the time he entered sixth grade.

Today, with the support of a tightly knit school community, he's one of the top students in his senior class at Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning Schools, or WHEELS. Last month, he and his classmates put on their WHEELS sweatshirts, unfurled a banner, waved flags and marched down the streets of Washington Heights in New York City through cheering crowds. You would have thought it was the Macy's parade. [*Laughter*] But the crowds on the sidewalk were parents and teachers and neighbors. The flags were college pennants. The march was to the post office, where they mailed in their college applications. And Estiven just heard back. This son of a factory worker who didn't speak much English just 6 years ago won a competitive scholarship to attend Dickinson College this fall.

So everywhere you go, you've got stories like Estiven's, and you've got stories like Troy's. But we don't want these to be the exceptions, we want these to be the rule. That's what we owe our young people, and that's what we owe this country. We all have a stake in restoring that fundamental American idea that says: It doesn't matter where you start, what matters is where you end up. And as parents and as teachers and as business and philanthropic and political leaders—and as citizens—we've all got a role to play.

So I'm going to spend the next 3 years as President playing mine. And I look forward to working with you on the same team to make this happen. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:50 a.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Troy Simon, student, Bard College, who introduced the First Lady. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks on United States Signals Intelligence and Electronic Surveillance Programs

January 17, 2014

Thank you so much. Please have a seat. At the dawn of our Republic, a small, secret surveillance committee born out of the Sons of Liberty was established in Boston. And the group's members included Paul Revere. At night, they would patrol the streets, reporting back any signs that the British were preparing raids against America's early patriots.

Throughout American history, intelligence has helped secure our country and our freedoms. In the Civil War, Union balloons reconnaissance tracked the size of Confederate armies by counting the number of campfires. In World War II, code breakers gave us insights into Japanese war plans, and when Patton marched across Europe, intercepted communications helped save the lives of his troops. After the war, the rise of the Iron Curtain and nuclear weapons only increased the need for sustained intelligence gathering. And so, in the early days of the cold war, President Truman created the National Security Agency, or NSA, to give us insights into the Soviet bloc and provide our leaders with information they needed to confront aggression and avert catastrophe.

Throughout this evolution, we benefited from both our Constitution and our traditions of limited government. U.S. intelligence agencies were anchored in a system of checks and balances, with oversight from elected leaders and protections for ordinary citizens. Meanwhile, totalitarian states like East Germany offered a cautionary tale of what could happen when vast, unchecked surveillance turned citizens into informers and persecuted people for what they said in the privacy of their own homes.

In fact, even the United States proved not to be immune to the abuse of surveillance. And in the 1960s, Government spied on civil rights leaders and critics of the Vietnam war. And partly in response to these revelations, additional laws were established in the 1970s to ensure that our intelligence capabilities could not be misused against our citizens. In the long, twilight struggle against communism, we had been reminded that the very liberties that we sought to preserve could not be sacrificed at the altar of national security.

Now, if the fall of the Soviet Union left America without a competing superpower, emerging threats from terrorist groups and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction placed new and in some ways more complicated demands on our intelligence agencies. Globalization and the Internet made these threats more acute, as technology erased borders and empowered individuals to project great violence as well as great good. Moreover, these new threats raised new legal and new policy questions. For while few doubted the legitimacy of spying on hostile states, our framework of laws was not fully adapted to prevent terrorist attacks by individuals acting on their own or acting in small, ideological—ideologically driven groups on behalf of a foreign power.

The horror of September 11 brought all these issues to the fore. Across the political spectrum, Americans recognized that we had to adapt to a world in which a bomb could be built in a basement and our electric grid could be shut down by operators an ocean away. We were shaken by the signs we had missed leading up to the attacks: how the hijackers had made phone calls to known extremists and

traveled to suspicious places. So we demanded that our intelligence community improve its capabilities and that law enforcement change practices to focus more on preventing attacks before they happen than prosecuting terrorists after an attack.

It is hard to overstate the transformation America's intelligence community had to go through after 9/11. Our agencies suddenly needed to do far more than the traditional mission of monitoring hostile powers and gathering information for policymakers. Instead, they were now asked to identify and target plotters in some of the most remote parts of the world and to anticipate the actions of networks that, by their very nature, cannot be easily penetrated with spies or informants.

And it is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of the men and women of our intelligence community that over the past decade, we've made enormous strides in fulfilling this mission. Today, new capabilities allow intelligence agencies to track who a terrorist is in contact with and follow the trail of his travel or his funding. New laws allow information to be collected and shared more quickly and effectively between Federal agencies and State and local law enforcement. Relationships with foreign intelligence services have expanded, and our capacity to repel cyber attacks have been strengthened. And taken together, these efforts have prevented multiple attacks and saved innocent lives, not just here in the United States, but around the globe.

And yet, in our rush to respond to a very real and novel set of threats, the risk of Government overreach—the possibility that we lose some of our core liberties in pursuit of security—also became more pronounced. We saw, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, our Government engaged in enhanced interrogation techniques that contradicted our values. As a Senator, I was critical of several practices, such as warrantless wiretaps. And all too often new authorities were instituted without adequate public debate.

Through a combination of action by the courts, increased congressional oversight, and adjustments by the previous administration, some of the worst excesses that emerged after 9/11 were curbed by the time I took office. But a variety of factors have continued to complicate America's efforts to both defend our Nation and uphold our civil liberties.

First, the same technological advances that allow U.S. intelligence agencies to pinpoint an Al Qaida cell in Yemen or an e-mail between two terrorists in the Sahel also mean that many routine communications around the world are within our reach. And at a time when more and more of our lives are digital, that prospect is disquieting for all of us.

Second, the combination of increased digital information and powerful supercomputers offers intelligence agencies the possibility of sifting through massive amounts of bulk data to identify patterns or pursue leads that may thwart impending threats. It's a powerful tool. But the Government collection and storage of such bulk data also creates a potential for abuse.

Third, the legal safeguards that restrict surveillance against U.S. persons without a warrant do not apply to foreign persons overseas. This is not unique to America; few, if any, spy agencies around the world constrain their activities beyond their own borders. And the whole point of intelligence is to obtain information that is not publicly available. But America's capabilities are unique, and the power of new technologies means that there are fewer and fewer technical constraints on what we can do. That places a special obligation on us to ask tough questions about what we should do.

And finally, intelligence agencies cannot function without secrecy, which makes their work less subject to public debate. Yet there is an inevitable bias, not only within the intelligence community, but among all of us who are responsible for national security, to collect more information about the world, not less. So in the absence of institutional requirements for regular debate and oversight that is public as well as private or classified, the danger of Government overreach becomes more acute. And this is particularly true when surveillance technology and our reliance on digital information is evolving much faster than our laws.

For all these reasons, I maintained a healthy skepticism toward our surveillance programs after I became President. I ordered that our programs be reviewed by my national security team and our lawyers, and in some cases, I ordered changes in how we did business. We increased oversight and auditing, including new structures aimed at compliance. Improved rules were proposed by the Government and approved by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. And we sought to keep Congress continually updated on these activities.

What I did not do is stop these programs wholesale, not only because I felt that they made us more secure, but also because nothing in that initial review and nothing that I have learned since indicated that our intelligence community has sought to violate the law or is cavalier about the civil liberties of their fellow citizens.

To the contrary, in an extraordinarily difficult job—one in which actions are second-guessed, success is unreported, and failure can be catastrophic—the men and women of the intelligence community, including the NSA, consistently follow protocols designed to protect the privacy of ordinary people. They're not abusing authorities in order to listen to your private phone calls or read your e-mails. When mistakes are made—which is inevitable in any large and complicated human enterprise—they correct those mistakes. Laboring in obscurity, often unable to discuss their work even with family and friends, the men and women at the NSA know that if another 9/11 or massive cyber attack occurs, they will be asked, by Congress and the media, why they failed to connect the dots. What sustains those who work at NSA and our other intelligence agencies through all these pressures is the knowledge that their professionalism and dedication play a central role in the defense of our Nation.

Now, to say that our intelligence community follows the law and is staffed by patriots is not to suggest that I or others in my administration felt complacent about the potential impact of these programs. Those of us who hold office in America have a responsibility to our Constitution, and while I was confident in the integrity of those who lead our intelligence community, it was clear to me in observing our intelligence operations on a regular basis that changes in our technological capabilities were raising new questions about the privacy safeguards currently in place.

Moreover, after an extended review of our use of drones in the fight against terrorist networks, I believed a fresh examination of our surveillance programs was a necessary next step in our effort to get off the open-ended war footing that we've maintained since 9/11. And for these reasons, I indicated in a speech at the National Defense University last May that we needed a more robust public discussion about the balance between security and liberty. Of course, what I did not know at the time is that within weeks of my speech, an avalanche of unauthorized disclosures would spark controversies at home and abroad that have continued to this day.

Now, given the fact of an open investigation, I'm not going to dwell on Mr. Snowden's actions or his motivations. I will say that our Nation's defense depends in part on the fidelity of those entrusted with our Nation's secrets. If any individual who objects to Government policy can take it into their own hands to publicly disclose classified information, then we will not be able to keep our people safe or conduct foreign policy. Moreover, the sensational way in which these disclosures have come out has often shed more heat than light, while revealing methods to our adversaries that could impact our operations in ways that we may not fully understand for years to come.

Regardless of how we got here, though, the task before us now is greater than simply repairing the damage done to our operations or preventing more disclosures from taking place in the future. Instead, we have to make some important decisions about how to protect ourselves and sustain our leadership in the world, while upholding the civil liberties and privacy protections that our ideals and our Constitution require. We need to do so not only because it is right, but because the challenges posed by threats like terrorism and proliferation and cyber attacks are not going away any

time soon. They are going to continue to be a major problem. And for our intelligence community to be effective over the long haul, we must maintain the trust of the American people and people around the world.

This effort will not be completed overnight, and given the pace of technological change, we shouldn't expect this to be the last time America has this debate. But I want the American people to know that the work has begun. Over the last 6 months, I created an outside Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies to make recommendations for reform. I consulted with the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board created by Congress. I've listened to foreign partners, privacy advocates, and industry leaders. My administration has spent countless hours considering how to approach intelligence in this era of diffuse threats and technological revolution. So before outlining specific changes that I've ordered, let me make a few broad observations that have emerged from this process.

First, everyone who has looked at these problems, including skeptics of existing programs, recognizes that we have real enemies and threats and that intelligence serves a vital role in confronting them. We cannot prevent terrorist attacks or cyber threats without some capability to penetrate digital communications, whether it's to unravel a terrorist plot, to intercept malware that targets a stock exchange, to make sure air traffic control systems are not compromised, or to ensure that hackers do not empty your bank accounts. We are expected to protect the American people; that requires us to have capabilities in this field.

Moreover, we cannot unilaterally disarm our intelligence agencies. There is a reason why BlackBerrys and iPhones are not allowed in the White House Situation Room. We know that the intelligence services of other countries—including some who feign surprise over the Snowden disclosures—are constantly probing our Government and private sector networks and accelerating programs to listen to our conversations and intercept our e-mails and compromise our systems. We know that.

Meanwhile, a number of countries—including some who have loudly criticized the NSA—privately acknowledge that America has special responsibilities as the world's only superpower, that our intelligence capabilities are critical to meeting these responsibilities, and that they themselves have relied on the information we obtain to protect their own people.

Second, just as ardent civil libertarians recognize the need for robust intelligence capabilities, those with responsibilities for our national security readily acknowledge the potential for abuse as intelligence capabilities advance and more and more private information is digitized. After all, the folks at NSA and other intelligence agencies are our neighbors. They're our friends and family. They've got electronic bank and medical records like everybody else. They have kids on Facebook and Instagram, and they know, more than most of us, the vulnerabilities to privacy that exist in a world where transactions are recorded and e-mail and text and messages are stored and even our movements can increasingly be tracked through the GPS on our phones.

Third, there was a recognition by all who participated in these reviews that the challenges to our privacy do not come from Government alone. Corporations of all shapes and sizes track what you buy, store and analyze our data, and use it for commercial purposes; that's how those targeted ads pop up on your computer and your smartphone periodically. But all of us understand that the standards for Government surveillance must be higher. Given the unique power of the state, it is not enough for leaders to say, "Trust us, we won't abuse the data we collect." For history has too many examples when that trust has been breached. Our system of Government is built on the premise that our liberty cannot depend on the good intentions of those in power, it depends on the law to constrain those in power.

I make these observations to underscore that the basic values of most Americans when it comes to questions of surveillance and privacy converge a lot more than the crude characterizations that have emerged over the last several months. Those who are troubled by our

existing programs are not interested in repeating the tragedy of 9/11, and those who defend these programs are not dismissive of civil liberties.

The challenge is getting the details right, and that is not simple. In fact, during the course of our review, I have often reminded myself I would not be where I am today were it not for the courage of dissidents like Dr. King who were spied upon by their own Government. And as President, a President who looks at intelligence every morning, I also can't help but be reminded that America must be vigilant in the face of threats.

Fortunately, by focusing on facts and specifics rather than speculation and hypotheticals, this review process has given me—and hopefully, the American people—some clear direction for change. And today I can announce a series of concrete and substantial reforms that my administration intends to adopt administratively or will seek to codify with Congress.

First, I have approved a new Presidential directive for our signals intelligence activities both at home and abroad. This guidance will strengthen executive branch oversight of our intelligence activities. It will ensure that we take into account our security requirements, but also our alliances; our trade and investment relationships, including the concerns of American companies; and our commitment to privacy and basic liberties. And we will review decisions about intelligence priorities and sensitive targets on an annual basis so that our actions are regularly scrutinized by my senior national security team.

Second, we will reform programs and procedures in place to provide greater transparency to our surveillance activities and fortify the safeguards that protect the privacy of U.S. persons. Since we began this review, including information being released today, we've declassified over 40 opinions and orders of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which provides judicial review of some of our most sensitive intelligence activities, including the section 702 program targeting foreign individuals overseas and the section 215 telephone metadata program.

And going forward, I'm directing the Director of National Intelligence, in consultation with the Attorney General, to annually review for the purposes of declassification any future opinions of the court with broad privacy implications and to report to me and to Congress on these efforts. To ensure that the court hears a broader range of privacy perspectives, I am also calling on Congress to authorize the establishment of a panel of advocates from outside Government to provide an independent voice in significant cases before the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.

Third, we will provide additional protections for activities conducted under section 702, which allows the Government to intercept the communications of foreign targets overseas who have information that's important for our national security. Specifically, I am asking the Attorney General and DNI to institute reforms that place additional restrictions on Government's ability to retain, search, and use in criminal cases communications between Americans and foreign citizens incidentally collected under section 702.

Fourth, in investigating threats, the FBI also relies on what's called national security letters, which can require companies to provide specific and limited information to the Government without disclosing the orders to the subject of the investigation. Now, these are cases in which it's important that the subject of the investigation, such as a possible terrorist or spy, isn't tipped off. But we can and should be more transparent in how Government uses this authority.

I've therefore directed the Attorney General to amend how we use national security letters so that this secrecy will not be indefinite, so that it will terminate within a fixed time unless the Government demonstrates a real need for further secrecy. We will also enable communications providers to make public more information than ever before about the orders that they have received to provide data to the Government.

This brings me to the program that has generated the most controversy these past few months: the bulk collection of telephone re-

cords under section 215. Let me repeat what I said when this story first broke: This program does not involve the content of phone calls or the names of people making calls. Instead, it provides a record of phone numbers and the times and lengths of calls, metadata that can be queried if and when we have a reasonable suspicion that a particular number is linked to a terrorist organization.

Why is this necessary? The program grew out of a desire to address a gap identified after 9/11. One of the 9/11 hijackers, Khalid al-Mihdhar, made a phone call from San Diego to a known Al Qaida safe house in Yemen. NSA saw that call, but it could not see that the call was coming from an individual already in the United States. The telephone metadata program under section 215 was designed to map the communications of terrorists so we can see who they may be in contact with as quickly as possible. And this capability could also prove valuable in a crisis. For example, if a bomb goes off in one of our cities and law enforcement is racing to determine whether a network is poised to conduct additional attacks, time is of the essence. Being able to quickly review phone connections to assess whether a network exists is critical to that effort.

In sum, the program does not involve the NSA examining the phone records of ordinary Americans. Rather, it consolidates these records into a database that the Government can query if it has a specific lead, a consolidation of phone records that the companies already retained for business purposes. The Review Group turned up no indication that this database has been intentionally abused. And I believe it is important that the capability that this program is designed to meet is preserved.

Having said that, I believe critics are right to point out that without proper safeguards, this type of program could be used to yield more information about our private lives and open the door to more intrusive bulk collection programs in the future. They're also right to point out that although the telephone bulk collection program was subject to oversight by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court and has been reauthorized repeatedly by Congress, it has never been subject to vigorous public debate.

For all these reasons, I believe we need a new approach. I am therefore ordering a transition that will end the section 215 bulk metadata program as it currently exists and establish a mechanism that preserves the capabilities we need without the Government holding this bulk metadata.

This will not be simple. The Review Group recommended that our current approach be replaced by one in which the providers or a third party retain the bulk records, with Government accessing information as needed. Both of these options pose difficult problems. Relying solely on the records of multiple providers, for example, could require companies to alter their procedures in ways that raise new privacy concerns. On the other hand, any third party maintaining a single, consolidated database would be carrying out what's essentially a Government function, but with more expense, more legal ambiguity, potentially less accountability, all of which would have a doubtful impact on increasing public confidence that their privacy is being protected.

During the review process, some suggested that we may also be able to preserve the capabilities we need through a combination of existing authorities, better information sharing, and recent technological advances. But more work needs to be done to determine exactly how this system might work.

Because of the challenges involved, I've ordered that the transition away from the existing program will proceed in two steps. Effective immediately, we will only pursue phone calls that are two steps removed from a number associated with a terrorist organization instead of the current three. And I have directed the Attorney General to work with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court so that during this transition period, the database can be queried only after a judicial finding or in the case of a true emergency.

Next, step two, I've instructed the intelligence community and the Attorney General to use this transition period to develop options for a new approach that can match the capabilities

and fill the gaps that the section 215 program was designed to address without the Government holding this metadata itself. They will report back to me with options for alternative approaches before the program comes up for reauthorization on March 28. And during this period, I will consult with the relevant committees in Congress to seek their views and then seek congressional authorization for the new program as needed.

Now, the reforms I'm proposing today should give the American people greater confidence that their rights are being protected, even as our intelligence and law enforcement agencies maintain the tools they need to keep us safe. And I recognize that there are additional issues that require further debate. For example, some who participated in our review, as well as some Members of Congress, would like to see more sweeping reforms to the use of national security letters so that we have to go to a judge each time before issuing these requests. Here, I have concerns that we should not set a standard for terrorism investigations that is higher than those involved in investigating an ordinary crime. But I agree that greater oversight on the use of these letters may be appropriate, and I'm prepared to work with Congress on this issue.

There are also those who would like to see different changes to the FISA Court than the ones I've proposed. On all these issues, I am open to working with Congress to ensure that we build a broad consensus for how to move forward, and I'm confident that we can shape an approach that meets our security needs while upholding the civil liberties of every American.

Let me now turn to the separate set of concerns that have been raised overseas and focus on America's approach to intelligence collection abroad. As I've indicated, the United States has unique responsibilities when it comes to intelligence collection. Our capabilities help protect not only our Nation, but our friends and our allies as well. But our efforts will only be effective if ordinary citizens in other countries have confidence that the United States respects their privacy too. And the leaders of our close friends and allies deserve to know that if I want to know what they think about an issue, I'll pick up the phone and call them, rather than turning to surveillance. In other words, just as we balance security and privacy at home, our global leadership demands that we balance our security requirements against our need to maintain the trust and cooperation among people and leaders around the world.

For that reason, the new Presidential directive that I've issued today will clearly prescribe what we do and do not do when it comes to our overseas surveillance. To begin with, the directive makes clear that the United States only uses signals intelligence for legitimate national security purposes and not for the purpose of indiscriminately reviewing the e-mails or phone calls of ordinary folks. I've also made it clear that the United States does not collect intelligence to suppress criticism or dissent, nor do we collect intelligence to disadvantage people on the basis of their ethnicity or race or gender or sexual orientation or religious beliefs. We do not collect intelligence to provide a competitive advantage to U.S. companies or U.S. commercial sectors.

And in terms of our bulk collection of signals intelligence, U.S. intelligence agencies will only use such data to meet specific security requirements: counterintelligence, counterterrorism, counterproliferation, cybersecurity, force protection for our troops and our allies, and combating transnational crime, including sanctions evasion.

In this directive, I have taken the unprecedented step of extending certain protections that we have for the American people to people overseas. I've directed the DNI, in consultation with the Attorney General, to develop these safeguards, which will limit the duration that we can hold personal information, while also restricting the use of this information.

The bottom line is that people around the world, regardless of their nationality, should know that the United States is not spying on ordinary people who don't threaten our national security and that we take their privacy concerns into account in our policies and proce-

dures. This applies to foreign leaders as well. Given the understandable attention that this issue has received, I have made clear to the intelligence community that unless there is a compelling national security purpose, we will not monitor the communications of heads of state and government of our close friends and allies. And I've instructed my national security team, as well as the intelligence community, to work with foreign counterparts to deepen our coordination and cooperation in ways that rebuild trust going forward.

Now, let me be clear: Our intelligence agencies will continue to gather information about the intentions of governments—as opposed to ordinary citizens—around the world, in the same way that the intelligence services of every other nation does. We will not apologize simply because our services may be more effective. But heads of state and government with whom we work closely and on whose cooperation we depend should feel confident that we are treating them as real partners. And the changes I've ordered do just that.

Finally, to make sure that we follow through on all these reforms, I am making some important changes to how our Government is organized. The State Department will designate a senior officer to coordinate our diplomacy on issues related to technology and signals intelligence. We will appoint a senior official at the White House to implement the new privacy safeguards that I have announced today. I will devote the resources to centralize and improve the process we use to handle foreign requests for legal assistance, keeping our high standards for privacy while helping foreign partners fight crime and terrorism.

I've also asked my Counselor, John Podesta, to lead a comprehensive review of big data and privacy. And this group will consist of Government officials who, along with the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology, will reach out to privacy experts, technologists, and business leaders and look how the challenges inherent in big data are being confronted by both the public and private sectors; whether we can forge international norms on how to manage this data; and how we can continue to promote the free flow of information in ways that are consistent with both privacy and security.

For ultimately, what's at stake in this debate goes far beyond a few months of headlines or passing tensions in our foreign policy. When you cut through the noise, what's really at stake is how we remain true to who we are in a world that is remaking itself at dizzying speed. Whether it's the ability of individuals to communicate ideas, to access information that would have once filled every great library in every country in the world, or to forge bonds with people on other sides of the globe, technology is remaking what is possible for individuals and for institutions and for the international order. So while the reforms that I've announced will point us in a new direction, I am mindful that more work will be needed in the future.

One thing I'm certain of: This debate will make us stronger. And I also know that in this time of change, the United States of America will have to lead. It may seem sometimes that America is being held to a different standard. And I'll admit, the readiness of some to assume the worst motives by our Government can be frustrating. No one expects China to have an open debate about their surveillance programs or Russia to take privacy concerns of citizens in other places into account. But let's remember: We are held to a different standard precisely because we have been at the forefront of defending personal privacy and human dignity.

As the nation that developed the Internet, the world expects us to ensure that the digital revolution works as a tool for individual empowerment, not Government control. Having faced down the dangers of totalitarianism and fascism and communism, the world expects us to stand up for the principle that every person has the right to think and write and form relationships freely, because individual freedom is the wellspring of human progress.

Those values make us who we are. And because of the strength of our own democracy, we should not shy away from high expectations. For more than two centuries, our Constitution has weathered every type of change because we

have been willing to defend it and because we have been willing to question the actions that have been taken in its defense. Today is no different. I believe we can meet high expectations. Together, let us chart a way forward that secures the life of our Nation while preserving the liberties that make our Nation worth fighting for.

Thank you. God bless you. May God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Great Hall at the Robert F. Kennedy Department of Justice Building. In his remarks, he referred to former National Security Agency contractor Edward J. Snowden, who is accused of leaking classified documents to members of the news media.

Directive on Signals Intelligence Activities
January 17, 2014

Presidential Policy Directive/PPD–28

Subject: Signals Intelligence Activities

The United States, like other nations, has gathered intelligence throughout its history to ensure that national security and foreign policy decisionmakers have access to timely, accurate, and insightful information.

The collection of signals intelligence is necessary for the United States to advance its national security and foreign policy interests and to protect its citizens and the citizens of its allies and partners from harm. At the same time, signals intelligence activities and the possibility that such activities may be improperly disclosed to the public pose multiple risks. These include risks to: our relationships with other nations, including the cooperation we receive from other nations on law enforcement, counterterrorism, and other issues; our commercial, economic, and financial interests, including a potential loss of international trust in U.S. firms and the decreased willingness of other nations to participate in international data sharing, privacy, and regulatory regimes; the credibility of our commitment to an open, interoperable, and secure global Internet; and the protection of intelligence sources and methods.

In addition, our signals intelligence activities must take into account that all persons should be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their nationality or wherever they might reside, and that all persons have legitimate privacy interests in the handling of their personal information.

In determining why, whether, when, and how the United States conducts signals intelligence activities, we must weigh all of these considerations in a context in which information and communications technologies are constantly changing. The evolution of technology has created a world where communications important to our national security and the communications all of us make as part of our daily lives are transmitted through the same channels. This presents new and diverse opportunities for, and challenges with respect to, the collection of intelligence—and especially signals intelligence. The United States Intelligence Community (IC) has achieved remarkable success in developing enhanced capabilities to perform its signals intelligence mission in this rapidly changing world, and these enhanced capabilities are a major reason we have been able to adapt to a dynamic and challenging security environment.[1] The United States must preserve and continue to develop a robust and technologically advanced signals intelligence capability to protect our security and that of our partners and allies. Our signals intelligence capabilities must also be agile enough to en-

[1] For the purposes of this directive, the terms "Intelligence Community" and "elements of the Intelligence Community" shall have the same meaning as they do in Executive Order 12333 of December 4, 1981, as amended (Executive Order 12333).

able us to focus on fleeting opportunities or emerging crises and to address not only the issues of today, but also the issues of tomorrow, which we may not be able to foresee.

Advanced technologies can increase risks, as well as opportunities, however, and we must consider these risks when deploying our signals intelligence capabilities. The IC conducts signals intelligence activities with care and precision to ensure that its collection, retention, use, and dissemination of signals intelligence account for these risks. In light of the evolving technological and geopolitical environment, we must continue to ensure that our signals intelligence policies and practices appropriately take into account our alliances and other partnerships; the leadership role that the United States plays in upholding democratic principles and universal human rights; the increased globalization of trade, investment, and information flows; our commitment to an open, interoperable and secure global Internet; and the legitimate privacy and civil liberties concerns of U.S. citizens and citizens of other nations.

Presidents have long directed the acquisition of foreign intelligence and counterintelligence[2] pursuant to their constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. They have also provided direction on the conduct of intelligence activities in furtherance of these authorities and responsibilities, as well as in execution of laws enacted by the Congress. Consistent with this historical practice, this directive articulates principles to guide why, whether, when, and how the United States conducts signals intelligence activities for authorized foreign intelligence and counterintelligence purposes.[3]

Section 1. Principles Governing the Collection of Signals Intelligence.

Signals intelligence collection shall be authorized and conducted consistent with the following principles:

(a) The collection of signals intelligence shall be authorized by statute or Executive Order, proclamation, or other Presidential directive, and undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and applicable statutes, Executive Orders, proclamations, and Presidential directives.

(b) Privacy and civil liberties shall be integral considerations in the planning of U.S. signals intelligence activities. The United States shall not collect signals intelligence for the purpose of suppressing or burdening criticism or dissent, or for disadvantaging persons based on their ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. Signals intelligence shall be collected exclusively where there is a foreign intelligence or counterintelligence purpose to support national and departmental missions and not for any other purposes.

(c) The collection of foreign private commercial information or trade secrets is authorized only to protect the national security of the United States or its partners and allies. It is not an authorized foreign intelligence or counterintelligence purpose to collect such information to afford a competitive advantage[4] to

[2] For the purposes of this directive, the terms "foreign intelligence" and "counterintelligence" shall have the same meaning as they have in Executive Order 12333. Thus, "foreign intelligence" means "information relating to the capabilities, intentions, or activities of foreign governments or elements thereof, foreign organizations, foreign persons, or international terrorists," and "counterintelligence" means "information gathered and activities conducted to identify, deceive, exploit, disrupt, or protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted for or on behalf of foreign powers, organizations, or persons, or their agents, or international terrorist organizations or activities." Executive Order 12333 further notes that "[i]ntelligence includes foreign intelligence and counterintelligence."

[3] Unless otherwise specified, this directive shall apply to signals intelligence activities conducted in order to collect communications or information about communications, except that it shall not apply to signals intelligence activities undertaken to test or develop signals intelligence capabilities.

[4] Certain economic purposes, such as identifying trade or sanctions violations or government influence or direction, shall not constitute competitive advantage.

U.S. companies and U.S. business sectors commercially.

(d) Signals intelligence activities shall be as tailored as feasible. In determining whether to collect signals intelligence, the United States shall consider the availability of other information, including from diplomatic and public sources. Such appropriate and feasible alternatives to signals intelligence should be prioritized.

Sec. 2. Limitations on the Use of Signals Intelligence Collected in Bulk.

Locating new or emerging threats and other vital national security information is difficult, as such information is often hidden within the large and complex system of modern global communications. The United States must consequently collect signals intelligence in bulk[5] in certain circumstances in order to identify these threats. Routine communications and communications of national security interest increasingly transit the same networks, however, and the collection of signals intelligence in bulk may consequently result in the collection of information about persons whose activities are not of foreign intelligence or counterintelligence value. The United States will therefore impose new limits on its use of signals intelligence collected in bulk. These limits are intended to protect the privacy and civil liberties of all persons, whatever their nationality and regardless of where they might reside.

In particular, when the United States collects nonpublicly available signals intelligence in bulk, it shall use that data only for the purposes of detecting and countering: (1) espionage and other threats and activities directed by foreign powers or their intelligence services against the United States and its interests; (2) threats to the United States and its interests from terrorism; (3) threats to the United States and its interests from the development, possession, proliferation, or use of weapons of mass destruction; (4) cybersecurity threats; (5) threats to U.S. or allied Armed Forces or other U.S or allied personnel; and (6) transnational criminal threats, including illicit finance and sanctions evasion related to the other purposes named in this section. In no event may signals intelligence collected in bulk be used for the purpose of suppressing or burdening criticism or dissent; disadvantaging persons based on their ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion; affording a competitive advantage to U.S. companies and U.S. business sectors commercially; or achieving any purpose other than those identified in this section.

The Assistant to the President and National Security Advisor (APNSA), in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), shall coordinate, on at least an annual basis, a review of the permissible uses of signals intelligence collected in bulk through the National Security Council Principals and Deputies Committee system identified in PPD–1 or any successor document. At the end of this review, I will be presented with recommended additions to or removals from the list of the permissible uses of signals intelligence collected in bulk.

The DNI shall maintain a list of the permissible uses of signals intelligence collected in bulk. This list shall be updated as necessary and made publicly available to the maximum extent feasible, consistent with the national security.

Sec. 3. Refining the Process for Collecting Signals Intelligence.

U.S. intelligence collection activities present the potential for national security damage if improperly disclosed. Signals intelligence collection raises special concerns, given the opportunities and risks created by the constantly evolving technological and geopolitical environment; the unique nature of such collection and the inherent concerns raised when signals intelligence can only be collected in bulk; and the risk of damage to our national security in-

[5] The limitations contained in this section do not apply to signals intelligence data that is temporarily acquired to facilitate targeted collection. References to signals intelligence collected in "bulk" mean the authorized collection of large quantities of signals intelligence data which, due to technical or operational considerations, is acquired without the use of discriminants (e.g., specific identifiers, selection terms, etc.).

terests and our law enforcement, intelligence-sharing, and diplomatic relationships should our capabilities or activities be compromised. It is, therefore, essential that national security policymakers consider carefully the value of signals intelligence activities in light of the risks entailed in conducting these activities.

To enable this judgment, the heads of departments and agencies that participate in the policy processes for establishing signals intelligence priorities and requirements shall, on an annual basis, review any priorities or requirements identified by their departments or agencies and advise the DNI whether each should be maintained, with a copy of the advice provided to the APNSA.

Additionally, the classified Annex to this directive, which supplements the existing policy process for reviewing signals intelligence activities, affirms that determinations about whether and how to conduct signals intelligence activities must carefully evaluate the benefits to our national interests and the risks posed by those activities.[6]

Sec. 4. Safeguarding Personal Information Collected Through Signals Intelligence.

All persons should be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their nationality or wherever they might reside, and all persons have legitimate privacy interests in the handling of their personal information.[7] U.S. signals intelligence activities must, therefore, include appropriate safeguards for the personal information of all individuals, regardless of the nationality of the individual to whom the information pertains or where that individual resides.[8]

(a) *Policies and Procedures.* The DNI, in consultation with the Attorney General, shall ensure that all elements of the IC establish policies and procedures that apply the following principles for safeguarding personal information collected from signals intelligence activities. To the maximum extent feasible consistent with the national security, these policies and procedures are to be applied equally to the personal information of all persons, regardless of nationality:[9]

i. *Minimization.* The sharing of intelligence that contains personal information is necessary to protect our national security and advance our foreign policy interests, as it enables the United States to coordinate activities across our government. At the same time, however, by setting appropriate limits on such sharing, the United States takes legitimate privacy concerns into account and decreases the risks that personal information will be misused or mishandled. Relatedly, the significance to our national security of intelligence is not always apparent upon an initial review of information: intelligence

[6] Section 3 of this directive, and the directive's classified Annex, do not apply to (1) signals intelligence activities undertaken by or for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in support of predicated investigations other than those conducted solely for purposes of acquiring foreign intelligence; or (2) signals intelligence activities undertaken in support of military operations in an area of active hostilities, covert action, or human intelligence operations.

[7] Departments and agencies shall apply the term "personal information" in a manner that is consistent for U.S. persons and non-U.S. persons. Accordingly, for the purposes of this directive, the term "personal information" shall cover the same types of information covered by "information concerning U.S. persons" under section 2.3 of Executive Order 12333.

[8] The collection, retention, and dissemination of information concerning "United States persons" is governed by multiple legal and policy requirements, such as those required by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and Executive Order 12333. For the purposes of this directive, the term "United States person" shall have the same meaning as it does in Executive Order 12333.

[9] The policies and procedures of affected elements of the IC shall also be consistent with any additional IC policies, standards, procedures, and guidance the DNI, in coordination with the Attorney General, the heads of IC elements, and the heads of any other departments containing such elements, may issue to implement these principles. This directive is not intended to alter the rules applicable to U.S. persons in Executive Order 12333, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or other applicable law.

must be retained for a sufficient period of time for the IC to understand its relevance and use it to meet our national security needs. However, long-term storage of personal information unnecessary to protect our national security is inefficient, unnecessary, and raises legitimate privacy concerns. Accordingly, IC elements shall establish policies and procedures reasonably designed to minimize the dissemination and retention of personal information collected from signals intelligence activities.

- *Dissemination:* Personal information shall be disseminated only if the dissemination of comparable information concerning U.S. persons would be permitted under section 2.3 of Executive Order 12333.
- *Retention:* Personal information shall be retained only if the retention of comparable information concerning U.S. persons would be permitted under section 2.3 of Executive Order 12333 and shall be subject to the same retention periods as applied to comparable information concerning U.S. persons. Information for which no such determination has been made shall not be retained for more than 5 years, unless the DNI expressly determines that continued retention is in the national security interests of the United States.

Additionally, within 180 days of the date of this directive, the DNI, in coordination with the Attorney General, the heads of other elements of the IC, and the heads of departments and agencies containing other elements of the IC, shall prepare a report evaluating possible additional dissemination and retention safeguards for personal information collected through signals intelligence, consistent with technical capabilities and operational needs.

ii. *Data Security and Access*. When our national security and foreign policy needs require us to retain certain intelligence, it is vital that the United States take appropriate steps to ensure that any personal information contained within that intelligence is secure. Accordingly, personal information shall be processed and stored under conditions that provide adequate protection and prevent access by unauthorized persons, consistent with the applicable safeguards for sensitive information contained in relevant Executive Orders, proclamations, Presidential directives, IC directives, and associated policies. Access to such personal information shall be limited to authorized personnel with a need to know the information to perform their mission, consistent with the personnel security requirements of relevant Executive Orders, IC directives, and associated policies. Such personnel will be provided appropriate and adequate training in the principles set forth in this directive. These persons may access and use the information consistent with applicable laws and Executive Orders and the principles of this directive; personal information for which no determination has been made that it can be permissibly disseminated or retained under section 4(a)(i) of this directive shall be accessed only in order to make such determinations(or to conduct authorized administrative, security, and oversight functions).

iii. *Data Quality.* IC elements strive to provide national security policymakers with timely, accurate, and insightful intelligence, and inaccurate records and reporting can not only undermine our national security interests, but also can result in the collection or analysis of information relating to persons whose activities are not of foreign intelligence or counterintelligence value. Accordingly, personal information shall be included in intelligence products only as consistent with applicable IC standards for accuracy and objectivity, as set forth in relevant IC directives. Moreover, while IC

elements should apply the IC Analytic Standards as a whole, particular care should be taken to apply standards relating to the quality and reliability of the information, consideration of alternative sources of information and interpretations of data, and objectivity in performing analysis.

iv. *Oversight.* The IC has long recognized that effective oversight is necessary to ensure that we are protecting our national security in a manner consistent with our interests and values. Accordingly, the policies and procedures of IC elements, and departments and agencies containing IC elements, shall include appropriate measures to facilitate oversight over the implementation of safeguards protecting personal information, to include periodic auditing against the standards required by this section.

The policies and procedures shall also recognize and facilitate the performance of oversight by the Inspectors General of IC elements, and departments and agencies containing IC elements, and other relevant oversight entities, as appropriate and consistent with their responsibilities. When a significant compliance issue occurs involving personal information of any person, regardless of nationality, collected as a result of signals intelligence activities, the issue shall, in addition to any existing reporting requirements, be reported promptly to the DNI, who shall determine what, if any, corrective actions are necessary. If the issue involves a non-United States person, the DNI, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the head of the notifying department or agency, shall determine whether steps should be taken to notify the relevant foreign government, consistent with the protection of sources and methods and of U.S. personnel.

(b) *Update and Publication.* Within 1 year of the date of this directive, IC elements shall update or issue new policies and procedures as necessary to implement section 4 of this directive, in coordination with the DNI. To enhance public understanding of, and promote public trust in, the safeguards in place to protect personal information, these updated or newly issued policies and procedures shall be publicly released to the maximum extent possible, consistent with classification requirements.

(c) *Privacy and Civil Liberties Policy Official.* To help ensure that the legitimate privacy interests all people share related to the handling of their personal information are appropriately considered in light of the principles in this section, the APNSA, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) shall identify one or more senior officials who will be responsible for working with the DNI, the Attorney General, the heads of other elements of the IC, and the heads of departments and agencies containing other elements of the IC, as appropriate, as they develop the policies and procedures called for in this section.

(d) *Coordinator for International Diplomacy.* The Secretary of State shall identify a senior official within the Department of State to coordinate with the responsible departments and agencies the United States Government's diplomatic and foreign policy efforts related to international information technology issues and to serve as a point of contact for foreign governments who wish to raise concerns regarding signals intelligence activities conducted by the United States.

Sec. 5. Reports.

(a) Within 180 days of the date of this directive, the DNI shall provide a status report that updates me on the progress of the IC's implementation of section 4 of this directive.

(b) The Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board is encouraged to provide me with a report that assesses the implementation of any matters contained within this directive that fall within its mandate.

(c) Within 120 days of the date of this directive, the President's Intelligence Advisory Board shall provide me with a report identifying options for assessing the distinction between

metadata and other types of information, and for replacing the "need-to-share" or "need-to-know" models for classified information sharing with a Work-Related Access model.

(d) Within 1 year of the date of this directive, the DNI, in coordination with the heads of relevant elements of the IC and OSTP, shall provide me with a report assessing the feasibility of creating software that would allow the IC more easily to conduct targeted information acquisition rather than bulk collection.

Sec. 6. General Provisions.

(a) Nothing in this directive shall be construed to prevent me from exercising my constitutional authority, including as Commander in Chief, Chief Executive, and in the conduct of foreign affairs, as well as my statutory authority. Consistent with this principle, a recipient of this directive may at any time recommend to me, through the APNSA, a change to the policies and procedures contained in this directive.

(b) Nothing in this directive shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the authority or responsibility granted by law to a United States Government department or agency, or the head thereof, or the functions of the Director of OMB relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals. This directive is intended to supplement existing processes or procedures for reviewing foreign intelligence or counterintelligence activities and should not be read to supersede such processes and procedures unless explicitly stated.

(c) This directive shall be implemented consistent with applicable U.S. law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(d) This directive is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this directive.

Remarks on Signing the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014
January 17, 2014

Hello, everybody. Have a seat, have a seat. Now, this is not usually where I do bill signings. [*Laughter*] But in addition to the opportunity to take a walk—and whenever I get a chance to take a walk, I seize it—we wanted to make sure that we did this bill signing here because it represents the extraordinary work of so many of you.

Obviously, over the last several years, we've been dealing with the need to recover from the worst recession since the Great Depression. And that involved making sure we were investing in, first and foremost, the American people; that we were helping businesses stay open; that we were helping to make sure the financial system was back on track, that we reformed it so that we wouldn't see the kinds of crisis that we saw again; and most importantly, that we did everything we can to lay the foundation so that we have a middle class in this country that is thriving and growing and we've got ladders of opportunity for everybody who wants to work hard and get ahead.

And we've made remarkable progress over the last 5 years, but we have not made enough. Part of the reason we hadn't made as much progress as we needed to was we had a series of self-inflicted wounds in this town in which a mindless sequester impeded growth, in which we were governing by crisis and brinksmanship. And not only did that slow our ability to generate a full recovery, not only did that hamper economic growth, but it also had an enormous impact on all of you. And I know that the Office of Management and Budget was one of the hardest hit during the sequester and a lot of you were furloughed. A lot of you who remained during some of these furloughs had to carry extraordinary burdens, and so it took a personal toll on you and it took a personal toll on your family.

And yet, in part because of your dedication and your strength and your devotion to doing your jobs well, in part because of the strong leadership of Senator Barbara Mikulski and Congressman Rogers—Chairman Rogers, we

now have a bill that will fund our Government, all our vital services: make sure that we are able to provide the needs for our veterans; to make sure that we are doing everything we need to do to advance our research agenda in this country and innovate; to make sure that we're investing in the job training that young people desperately need in order to get the skills to find that good-paying job.

Across the board, our Government is going to be operating without, hopefully, too many glitches over the next year. And not only is that good for all of you and all the dedicated public servants in the Federal Government, but most importantly, it's good for the American people because it means that we can focus our attention where we need to: on growing this economy and making sure that everybody gets a fair shot as long as they try.

We would not be here and we would not be able to sign this legislation if it hadn't been for your work and your dedication. And so this is my way of saying thank you. I want to say thank you to Sylvia and Brian and the whole team here and everybody represented because, goodness gracious, that is a big piece of business. [*Laughter*] That is a big bill. [*Laughter*] And I'm always interested on, like, where do they have the boxes for the really big ones? [*Laughter*] Somebody makes them.

But what that represents is just hours and hours and weekends and nights where people are really paying attention and sweating the details. And that's what you do. So these aren't numbers. These are homeless folks who are getting housing. These are a laid-off worker who suddenly is enrolling in that community college and finding that job that allows them to save a home and get back on track. That's some young scientist who is maybe going to find a cure for cancer or Alzheimer's. That's what those numbers represent. And that's because of you.

So thank you for your good work. And without further delay, so you guys can start your weekends—[*laughter*]—and I've got to get back because somebody is having a birthday today. [*Laughter*] I've got to make sure I pay them some attention. [*Laughter*] I'm going to go ahead and sit down and sign the bill. All right?

And I'm going to use all these pens. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

There we go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. at the Office of Management and Budget in the New Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Harold D. Rogers, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations. H.R. 3547, approved January 17, was assigned Public Law No. 113–76.

Statement on Senator Thomas A. Coburn's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
January 17, 2014

Those of us who have had the privilege of serving with Tom Coburn will be sad to lose him as a colleague here in Washington. Tom and I entered the Senate at the same time, becoming friends after our wives struck up a conversation at an orientation dinner. And even though we haven't always agreed politically, we've found ways to work together: to make Government more transparent, cut down on earmarks, and fight to reduce wasteful spending and make our tax system fairer. The people of Oklahoma have been well served by this "country doctor from Muskogee" over the past 9 years, and I'm confident that Tom's strength and optimism will carry him through the battles to come. Michelle and I will always be grateful to Tom and Carolyn for their friendship, and we wish them all the best in all the years ahead.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Regarding the Designation of Funds for Overseas Contingency Operations and Global Counterterrorism
January 17, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 6 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (the "Act"), I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding (including the rescission of funds) so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

The President's Weekly Address
January 18, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, I visited a company in Raleigh, North Carolina, that helps make electric motors that save businesses money on energy costs and cut harmful carbon pollution. And I stopped by NC State University, where engineers are set to develop the new technology that will make those motors even better. It's part of my push not only to make America home to more high-tech manufacturing, but to make America more attractive for the good jobs that a growing middle class requires.

And increasingly, we are. Thanks in part to our all-of-the-above strategy for American energy, for the first time in nearly two decades, we produce more oil here at home than we buy from the rest of the world. We generate more renewable energy than ever and more natural gas than anybody. Health care costs are growing at their slowest rate in 50 years, due in part to the Affordable Care Act. And since I took office, we've cut our deficits by more than half.

So we are primed to bring back more of the good jobs claimed by the recession and lost to overseas competition in recent decades. But that requires a year of action. I want to work with Congress this year on proven ways to create jobs, like building infrastructure and fixing our broken immigration system.

Where Congress isn't acting, I'll act on my own to put opportunity within reach for anyone who's willing to work for it. That's what I did in Raleigh by launching America's second manufacturing innovation institute. It's a partnership between companies, colleges, and the Federal Government focused on making sure American businesses and American workers win the race for high-tech manufacturing and the jobs that come with it, jobs that can help people and communities willing to work hard punch their ticket into the middle class.

I firmly believe that this can be a breakthrough year for America. But to make that happen, we're going to have to act: to create good jobs that pay good wages and to offer more Americans a fair shot to get ahead. That's what I'm focused on every day that I have the privilege of serving as your President. That's what I'm going to be focused on every single day of this year.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:10 p.m. on January 17 in the Library at the White House for broadcast on January 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 17, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on January 18.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process
January 21, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2014.

The crisis with respect to grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that led to the declaration of a national emergency on January 23, 1995, has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage in activities that have the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process and that are hostile to United States interests in the region. Such actions continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process and to maintain in force the economic sanctions against them to respond to this threat.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the Presidential Commission on Election Administration
January 22, 2014

Hello, everybody. Glad you guys made it to work.

I just want to say thank you publicly to all the wonderful people here who served on the Presidential Commission on Election Administration. I think all of us recall that in the last election in 2012, we had reports around the country of tremendously long lines for people when they had tried to vote, and in some cases, for hours they were stuck. The day of the election I said that we're going to need to do something about it.

And I think all of us share the belief that, regardless of party affiliation, that our democracy demands that our citizens can participate in a smooth and effective way. And I called on Congress to work with us, but I also thought that it was important for us to have a bipartisan, independent panel that could actually dig into the facts and try to determine what can we do to improve this situation.

And unlike a lot of countries, we've got a pretty complex system. We vote a lot. We have local jurisdictions that run these elections, and it makes things a little bit more complicated. But I was confident that if we put some good minds to work, they could come up with some recommendations. As a consequence, we set up this Commission.

I asked my top attorney during my election campaign, Bob Bauer, to join with Mitt Romney's top attorney in 2012, Ben Ginsberg, to cochair this Commission. I think it's fair to say that they may have voted for different candidates in 2012—[*laughter*]—but what they shared was a reputation for integrity, for smarts, and a commitment to making sure that our democracy works the way it's supposed to.

And they have now, working with the rest of this Commission, put together an outstanding series of recommendations with an important goal, which is that no American should have to wait more than half an hour to vote. And they should know—they should be confident—that their vote is being properly counted and is secure. A lot of the recommendations they've made are common sense; they are ones that can be embraced by all of us. Importantly, my understanding is, a lot of the Commission recommendations are directed not simply at Congress or the Federal Government, but rather to the State and local jurisdictions who are largely responsible for our elections.

And so we intend to publicize this and to then reach out to stakeholders all across the country to make sure that we can implement this, in part because one of the troubling aspects of the work that they did was hearing from local officials indicating that we could have even more problems in the future if we don't act now. The good news is, is that the recommendations that are contained in this Commission report are eminently doable.

So I just want to publicly, again, thank both Bob and Ben for taking on this largely thankless job. And I want to thank all of you for being so diligent and maintaining a sense of urgency, producing an outstanding report in a relatively short period of time.

So thank you very much, everyone.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to 2012 Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks on Sexual Assault Prevention Efforts
January 22, 2014

The President. Thank you. Please have a seat. Well, hello, everybody. Welcome to the White House. To all of you in my administration, the partners with the White House Council on Women and Girls, led by Valerie and Tina Tchen, I want to thank all of you for being here today and for the work that you're doing every single day to advance a cause that matters to all of us, and that's preventing the outrage, the crime, of sexual violence in America.

I especially want to thank the members of my Cabinet who are here today. We've got Secretaries Chuck Hagel, Kathleen Sebelius, and Arne Duncan, as well as Attorney General Holder. And their presence here today, and the presence of so many leaders from across my administration, is a testament to how important we consider this issue and how committed we are across the entire Federal Government to meeting this challenge.

And that, of course, includes our outstanding Vice President. Few people have brought more passion to this fight over the decades than Joe Biden. Back when a lot of people believed that domestic abuse was a private family matter and women in danger often had nobody to turn to, Joe was out there saying: "This is unacceptable. This has to change." And thanks to Joe and so many others, this Nation enshrined its commitment in the Violence Against Women's Act.

Police officers and prosecutors got special training on domestic violence. More shelters opened across the country. A national hotline was created. And as Joe mentioned, a cultural shift began to occur. Americans came to see how serious this problem was and how we all needed to do more to address it. And that's resulted in more hope and more safety and a new chance at life for countless women. So Joe was on the frontlines on this, and you can tell his

passion is unabated. And so we are very grateful for everything that you've done on this work.

Vice President Joe Biden. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, Joe. [*Applause*] Appreciate it.

So I think that conviction and that passion brings us all here today. because this is not an abstract problem that goes on in other families or other communities. Even now, it's not always talked about enough. It can still go on in the shadows. But it affects every one of us. It's about all of us: our moms, our wives, our sisters, our daughters, our sons. Sexual assault is an affront on our basic decency and humanity. And for survivors, the awful pain can take years, even decades to heal. Sometimes, it lasts a lifetime. And wherever it occurs—whether it's in our neighborhoods or on our college campuses, our military bases or our tribal lands—it has to matter to all of us.

Because when a young girl or a young boy starts to question their self-worth after being assaulted and maybe starts withdrawing, we're all deprived of their full potential. When a young woman drops out of school after being attacked, that's not just a loss for her, that's a loss for our country. We've all got a stake in that young woman's success.

When a mother struggles to hold down a job after a traumatic assault or is assaulted in order to keep a job, that matters to all of us, because strong families are a foundation of a strong country. And if that woman doesn't feel like she has recourse when she's subject to abuse and we're not there supporting her, shame on us. When a member of our military is assaulted by the very people he or she trusted and serves with, or when they leave the military, voluntarily or involuntarily because they were raped, that's a profound injustice that no one who volunteers to defend America should ever have to endure.

So sexual violence is more than just a crime against individuals. It threatens our families, it threatens our communities; ultimately, it threatens the entire country. It tears apart the fabric of our communities. And that's why we're here today, because we have the power to do something about it as a Government, as a nation. We have the capacity to stop sexual assault, support those who have survived it, and bring perpetrators to justice.

And that's why last year I was proud to sign the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women's Act, which improved the support we gave to cities and States to help end sexual assault. And that includes funding to train police officers and nurses and to speed up the processing of untested rape kits so we can reduce that backlog, solve unsolved cases, get justice for victims.

We pushed for the Violence Against Women Act to include more protections for immigrants; for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans; for Native Americans. Because no matter who you are or where you live, everybody in this country deserves security and justice and dignity. And we have to keep reaching out to people who are still suffering in the shadows.

As Commander in Chief, I've made it clear to our military leadership that we need to deal aggressively with the problem of sexual assault in our Armed Forces. It has been going on too long, and we have an obligation to protect the men and women who put their lives on the line to protect us. And Secretary Hagel and Secretary—and Chairman Dempsey have already taken steps to reduce violence and support those who have been harmed. But I've made it clear, I expect significant progress in the year ahead. These crimes have no place in the greatest military on Earth.

I've directed agencies across the Federal Government to do more to help members of their workforce who have been assaulted, because employers have a role to play too, and I want my administration to lead by example. That's why we're releasing a new report today that outlines all of our efforts and where we intend to do more. And I met earlier today with Secretaries Sebelius, Hagel, Duncan, Attorney General Holder, as well as Vice President Biden, as well as members of my senior staff to discuss how we implement going forward. Because I want to make sure we're doing

everything we can to spare another American the trauma of sexual assault.

Today we're taking another important step with a focus on our college campuses. It is estimated that one in five women on college campuses has been sexually assaulted during their time there—one in five. These young women worked so hard just to get into college; often, their parents are doing everything they can to help them pay for it. So when they finally make it there only to be assaulted, that is not just a nightmare for them and their families, it's an affront to everything they've worked so hard to achieve. It's totally unacceptable.

Three years ago, we sent every school district, college, and university that receives Federal funding new instructions clarifying their legal obligations to prevent and respond to sexual assault. And we have seen progress, including an inspiring wave of student-led activism and a growing number of students who have found the courage to come forward and report attacks. That's exactly what we want them to do. And we owe all these brave young people an extraordinary debt of gratitude.

But we cannot stop there. There's obviously more that we have to do to keep our students safe. And that's why here today I will sign a Presidential memorandum creating the White House Task Force To Protect Students From Sexual Assault. And we're going to work with colleges and universities and educational institutions of all kinds across America to help them come up with better ways to prevent and respond to sexual assault on their campuses. And then we'll help them put those ideas into practice, because our schools need to be places where our young people feel secure and confident as they prepare to go as far as their God-given talents can carry them.

And none of this is going to be easy. Some of you have worked on these issues for years. You know how long it took for our country to get to where we are now. And it didn't just take new laws. It took a fundamental change in our culture, a shift in our attitudes about how we think about sexual violence and how much we value the lives and dignity of our wives and sisters and daughters and sons. Over time, we've become a better, stronger nation for it.

But now it's up to each of us—every single one of us—to keep up that momentum. We've got to keep teaching young men in particular to show women the respect they deserve and to recognize sexual violence and be outraged by it and to do their part to stop it from happening in the first place. Now, during our discussion earlier today, we talked about, I want every young man in America to feel some strong peer pressure in terms of how they are supposed to behave and treat women. And that starts before they get to college.

So those of us who are fathers have an obligation to transmit that information. But we can do more to make sure that every young man out there—whether they're in junior high or high school or college or beyond—understand what's expected of them and what it means to be a man and to intervene if they see somebody else acting inappropriately. We're going to need to encourage young people, men and women, to realize that sexual assault is simply unacceptable. And they're going to have to summon the bravery to stand up and say so, especially when the social pressure to keep quiet or to go along can be very intense.

We've got to keep working with our teachers and police officers and health professionals and community leaders to search for new ways to prevent these crimes. My hope and intention is, is that every college president who has not personally been thinking about this is going to hear about this report and is going to go out and figure out who is in charge on their campus of responding properly and what are the best practices and are we doing everything that we should be doing? And if you're not doing that right now, I want the students at the school to ask the president what he is doing or she is doing. And perhaps most important, we need to keep saying to anyone out there who has ever been assaulted, you are not alone. You will never be alone. We have your back; I've got your back.

And I promise I'm going to keep fighting for you and your families, and I'm going to keep pushing for others to step up across my admin-

istration and in Congress and in State capitals and in college campuses and on our military bases and all across our country. This is a priority for me not only as President and Commander in Chief, but as a husband and a father of two extraordinary girls.

I've often said in my travels around the world: You can judge a nation and how successful it will be based on how it treats its women and its girls. Those nations that are successful, they're successful in part because women and girls are valued. And I'm determined that, by that measure, the United States of America will be the global leader. I'm grateful to each of you for making sure that happens. I'm grateful for Joe Biden for having led the charge both in Congress and in my administration on many of these issues.

And now I'd ask that those of you who will be joining me, please come up so I can sign this memorandum.

[*At this point, the President signed the memorandum.*]

Done. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett; and Chief of Staff to the First Lady Christina M. Tchen, in her capacity as Executive Director of the White House Council of Women and Girls. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden, who introduced the President. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the 41st Anniversary of the Supreme Court Decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*
January 22, 2014

Today, as we reflect on the 41st anniversary of the Supreme Court decision in *Roe* v. *Wade,* we recommit ourselves to the decision's guiding principle: that every woman should be able to make her own choices about her body and her health. We reaffirm our steadfast commitment to protecting a woman's access to safe, affordable health care and her constitutional right to privacy, including the right to reproductive freedom. And we resolve to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies, support maternal and child health, and continue to build safe and healthy communities for all our children. Because this is a country where everyone deserves the same freedom and opportunities to fulfill their dreams.

Remarks at a United States Conference of Mayors Reception
January 23, 2014

Thank you. Please have a seat. The—well, welcome to the White House. It is great to have you. For those of you who have been here before, welcome back. I see a lot of friends and a lot of familiar faces around the room, but I've also already had a chance to meet some newly elected mayors. So to all of you, congratulations, and make sure you're shoveling the snow. [*Laughter*] I—just a little piece of advice. It's been cold.

We've got more than 250 mayors here from more than 45 States and Territories. You represent about 40 million Americans. And over the last 5 years, thanks in part to the partnerships that we've been able to forge with mayors in this room and across the country, we've accomplished some big things on behalf of the American people.

But you know as well as anybody that while our economy is growing stronger and we are optimistic about growth this year and in subsequent years, we've got a lot more work to do to make sure that everybody has a chance to get ahead. If they're willing to work hard and take

responsibility, they've got to be able to participate in that growth. And every day, mayors are proving that you don't have to wait for the gridlock to clear in Congress in order to make things happen.

Now, Mayor Greg Stanton in Phoenix and Mayor Ralph Becker in Salt Lake City have ended chronic homelessness among veterans. In San Antonio, Mayor Castro has launched an early childhood education program designed to reach more than 22,000 4-year-olds over the next 8 years. In Fresno, Mayor Ashley Swearengin is spearheading projects to develop her city's downtown, including a high-speed rail station that's going to help attract jobs and businesses to the Central Valley. In Philadelphia, Mayor Nutter is helping young people reach higher during their summers by working with partners across the city to create thousands of summer jobs. In Tampa, Mayor Bob Buckhorn has gone, in his words, "all in," helping his constituents get covered with quality, affordable health insurance.

So mayors from both parties are a part of the climate Task Force, helping to make sure that cities have what it takes to withstand changes that may be taking place in our atmosphere in the years to come. More than a thousand mayors across America have signed agreements to cut dangerous carbon pollutions. I want to work with Congress whenever and wherever I can, but the one thing I'm emphasizing to all my Cabinet members is, we're not going to wait. Where Congress is debating things and hasn't been able to pull the trigger on stuff, my administration is going to move forward and we're going to do it in partnership with all of you. I've got a pen, and I've got a phone. And that's all I need.

Because with a pen, I can take executive actions. With a phone, I can rally folks from around the country to help grow the economy and restore opportunity. And that's what today, hopefully, has been about. You've met with members of the administration. You've gotten to know each other, but also, hopefully, they've given you some insight into where we see the most promising programs, things that are working, best practices. And we want to cooperate and coordinate with you as effectively as we can to make sure that whatever works is getting out there and hitting the streets and actually having an impact on people's lives. And frankly, there are a lot of things that folks in this town could learn from all of you.

And I want to close by personally saying how much it means to me to have you here today. As Joe mentioned, I know a little something about cities. I got my professional career started as somebody working in some of the toughest neighborhoods in Chicago. But I also saw how hard work can transform communities block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood. And to see the resilience and the strength of people and the incredible vibrancy that cities bring to not just those who live within the boundaries of cities, but to entire regions, that's what you understand. And I want to make sure that I've got your back in everything that you do.

So I want to say thank you to all of you for making sure that your constituents are well served, but as a consequence, America is well served.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vice President Joe Biden. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden, who introduced the President.

Statement on the Situation in South Sudan
January 23, 2014

I welcome today's signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement in South Sudan, which is a critical first step toward building a lasting peace. Now South Sudan's leaders need to work to fully and immediately implement the agreement and start an inclusive political dialogue to resolve the underlying causes of the conflict. The full participation of political de-

tainees currently being held by the Government of South Sudan will be critical to those discussions, and we will continue to work to expedite their release. I am grateful for the constructive role played by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and our partners in the region to advance these efforts.

The United States has long supported the aspirations of the people of South Sudan for independence, peace, and prosperity. In order to regain the trust of their people and the international community, South Sudan's leaders must demonstrate their sustained commitment to a peaceful resolution of the crisis. They have an obligation to ensure that the lives of their people and future of their young country are not further marred by continued violence and that individuals who have committed atrocities are held to account. Those working for a more peaceful, democratic, unified South Sudan will continue to have a steady partner in the United States of America.

The President's Weekly Address
January 25, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, I called members of my Cabinet to the White House to deal with a challenge that affects so many families and communities: the crime, the outrage, of sexual violence. Sexual assault is an affront to our basic decency and humanity. And it's about all of us, the safety of those we love most: our moms, our wives, our daughters, and our sons.

Because when a child starts to question their self-worth after being abused and maybe starts withdrawing or a young woman drops out of school after being attacked or a mom struggles to hold down a job and support her kids after an assault, it's not just these individuals and their families who suffer. Our communities—our whole country—is held back.

Over the past 5 years, we've stepped up our efforts to stop these crimes. And this week, we took another important step to protect young women at college. An estimated one in five women is sexually assaulted at college, and that's totally unacceptable. So I've created the White House Task Force To Protect Students From Sexual Assault. We're going to help schools do a better job of preventing and responding to sexual assault on their campuses, because college should be a place where our young people feel secure and confident so they can go as far as their talents will take them.

And we're going to keep working to stop sexual assaults wherever they occur. We'll keep strengthening our criminal justice system so police and prosecutors have the tools and training to prevent these crimes and bring perpetrators to justice. We'll keep reaching out to survivors to make sure they're getting all the support they need to heal. We're going to keep combating sexual assault in our Armed Forces, because when a member of our military is attacked by the very people he or she trusts and serves with, that's an injustice that no one who volunteers to protect our Nation should ever endure.

Some of this is a job for government. But really, it's up to all of us. We've got to teach young people—men and women—to be brave enough to stand up and help put an end to these crimes. We've especially got to teach young men to show women the respect they deserve. I want every young man in America to know that real men do not hurt women. And those of us who are fathers have a special obligation to make sure every young man out there understands that being a man means recognizing sexual violence and being outraged by it and doing their part to stop it.

Perhaps most important, we need to keep saying to anyone out there who's ever been assaulted: You are not alone; we have your back. I've got your back.

I'm going to keep pushing for others to step up across my administration, in Congress, in State capitals, college campuses, and military bases all across our country. This is a priority for me, not only as President and Commander in Chief, but as a husband and a father of two extraordinary girls. And I hope it's a priority for

you, because here in the United States of America, every man and woman, every girl and boy, has the right to be safe and protected and to pursue their own piece of the American dream.

Let's all do our part to make that happen. Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:05 p.m. on January 24 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on January 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 24, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on January 25.

Statement on International Holocaust Remembrance Day
January 27, 2014

Each year on this day, the world comes together to commemorate a barbaric crime unique in human history. We recall 6 million Jews and millions of other innocent victims who were murdered in Nazi death camps. We mourn lives cut short and communities torn apart.

Yet, even on a day of solemn remembrance, there is room for hope. For January 27th is also the day Auschwitz was liberated 69 years ago. The noble acts of courage performed by liberators, rescuers, and the Righteous Among Nations remind us that we are never powerless. In our lives, we always have choices. In our time, this means choosing to confront bigotry and hatred in all of its forms, especially anti-Semitism. It means condemning any attempts to deny the occurrence of the Holocaust. It means doing our part to ensure that survivors receive some measure of justice and the support they need to live out their lives in dignity.

On this International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Michelle and I join the American people and our friends in the State of Israel and around the world as we reaffirm our obligation not just to bear witness, but to act. May God bless the memory of the millions, and may God grant us the strength and courage to make real our solemn vow: Never forget. Never again.

Statement on the Death of Pete Seeger
January 28, 2014

Once called "America's tuning fork," Pete Seeger believed deeply in the power of song. But more importantly, he believed in the power of community: to stand up for what's right, speak out against what's wrong, and move this country closer to the America he knew we could be. Over the years, Pete used his voice—and his hammer—to strike blows for workers' rights and civil rights, world peace and environmental conservation. And he always invited us to sing along. For reminding us where we come from and showing us where we need to go, we will always be grateful to Pete Seeger. Michelle and I send our thoughts and prayers to Pete's family and all those who loved him.

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union
January 28, 2014

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, my fellow Americans: Today in America, a teacher spent extra time with a student who needed it and did her part to lift America's graduation rate to its highest levels in more than three decades. An entrepreneur flipped on the lights in her tech startup and did her part to add to the more than 8 million new jobs our businesses have created over the past 4 years. An autoworker fine-tuned some of the

best, most fuel-efficient cars in the world and did his part to help America wean itself off foreign oil.

A farmer prepared for the spring after the strongest 5-year stretch of farm exports in our history. A rural doctor gave a young child the first prescription to treat asthma that his mother could afford. A man took the bus home from the graveyard shift, bone-tired, but dreaming big dreams for his son. And in tight-knit communities all across America, fathers and mothers will tuck in their kids, put an arm around their spouse, remember fallen comrades, and give thanks for being home from a war that after 12 long years is finally coming to an end.

Tonight this Chamber speaks with one voice to the people we represent: It is you, our citizens, who make the state of our Union strong.

And here are the results of your efforts: the lowest unemployment rate in over 5 years; a rebounding housing market; a manufacturing sector that's adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s; more oil produced at home than we buy from the rest of the world, the first time that's happened in nearly 20 years; our deficits cut by more than half. And for the first time in over a decade, business leaders around the world have declared that China is no longer the world's number-one place to invest, America is.

That's why I believe this can be a breakthrough year for America. After 5 years of grit and determined effort, the United States is better positioned for the 21st century than any other nation on Earth.

The question for everyone in this Chamber, running through every decision we make this year, is whether we are going to help or hinder this progress. For several years now, this town has been consumed by a rancorous argument over the proper size of the Federal Government. It's an important debate, one that dates back to our very founding. But when that debate prevents us from carrying out even the most basic functions of our democracy—when our differences shut down Government or threaten the full faith and credit of the United States—then we are not doing right by the American people.

Now, as President, I'm committed to making Washington work better and rebuilding the trust of the people who sent us here. And I believe most of you are too. Last month, thanks to the work of Democrats and Republicans, Congress finally produced a budget that undoes some of last year's severe cuts to priorities like education. Nobody got everything they wanted, and we can still do more to invest in this country's future while bringing down our deficit in a balanced way, but the budget compromise should leave us freer to focus on creating new jobs, not creating new crises.

And in the coming months, let's see where else we can make progress together. Let's make this a year of action. That's what most Americans want: for all of us in this Chamber to focus on their lives, their hopes, their aspirations. And what I believe unites the people of this Nation—regardless of race or region or party, young or old, rich or poor—is the simple, profound belief in opportunity for all: the notion that if you work hard and take responsibility, you can get ahead in America.

Now, let's face it, that belief has suffered some serious blows. Over more than three decades, even before the great recession hit, massive shifts in technology and global competition had eliminated a lot of good, middle class jobs and weakened the economic foundations that families depend on.

Today, after 4 years of economic growth, corporate profits and stock prices have rarely been higher, and those at the top have never done better. But average wages have barely budged. Inequality has deepened. Upward mobility has stalled. The cold, hard fact is that even in the midst of recovery, too many Americans are working more than ever just to get by, let alone to get ahead. And too many still aren't working at all.

So our job is to reverse these trends. It won't happen right away, and we won't agree on everything. But what I offer tonight is a set of concrete, practical proposals to speed up growth, strengthen the middle class, and build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class. Some require congressional action, and I am eager to work with all of you. But America

does not stand still, and neither will I. So wherever and whenever I can take steps without legislation to expand opportunity for more American families, that's what I'm going to do.

As usual, our First Lady sets a good example. [*Applause*] Well—[*applause*]. Michelle's "Let's Move!" partnership with schools, businesses, local leaders has helped bring down childhood obesity rates for the first time in 30 years. And that's an achievement that will improve lives and reduce health care costs for decades to come. The Joining Forces alliance that Michelle and Jill Biden launched has already encouraged employers to hire or train nearly 400,000 veterans and military spouses.

Taking a page from that playbook, the White House just organized a College Opportunity Summit, where already, 150 universities, businesses, nonprofits have made concrete commitments to reduce inequality in access to higher education and to help every hard-working kid go to college and succeed when they get to campus. And across the country, we're partnering with mayors, Governors, and State legislatures on issues from homelessness to marriage equality.

The point is, there are millions of Americans outside of Washington who are tired of stale political arguments and are moving this country forward. They believe—and I believe—that here in America, our success should depend not on accident of birth, but the strength of our work ethic and the scope of our dreams. That's what drew our forebears here. That's how the daughter of a factory worker is CEO of America's largest automaker; how the son of a barkeep is Speaker of the House; how the son of a single mom can be President of the greatest nation on Earth.

Opportunity is who we are. And the defining project of our generation must be to restore that promise. We know where to start: The best measure of opportunity is access to a good job. With the economy picking up speed, companies say they intend to hire more people this year. And over half of big manufacturers say they're thinking of insourcing jobs from abroad.

So let's make that decision easier for more companies. Both Democrats and Republicans have argued that our Tax Code is riddled with wasteful, complicated loopholes that punish businesses investing here and reward companies that keep profits abroad. Let's flip that equation. Let's work together to close those loopholes, end those incentives to ship jobs overseas, and lower tax rates for businesses that create jobs right here at home.

Moreover, we can take the money we save from this transition to tax reform to create jobs rebuilding our roads, upgrading our ports, unclogging our commutes, because in today's global economy, first-class jobs gravitate to first-class infrastructure. We'll need Congress to protect more than 3 million jobs by finishing transportation and waterways bills this summer. That can happen. But I'll act on my own to slash bureaucracy and streamline the permitting process for key projects so we can get more construction workers on the job as fast as possible.

We also have the chance right now to beat other countries in the race for the next wave of high-tech manufacturing jobs. My administration has launched two hubs for high-tech manufacturing in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Youngstown, Ohio, where we've connected businesses to research universities that can help America lead the world in advanced technologies. Tonight I'm announcing, we'll launch six more this year. Bipartisan bills in both Houses could double the number of these hubs and the jobs they create. So get those bills to my desk. Put more Americans back to work.

Let's do more to help the entrepreneurs and small-business owners who create most new jobs in America. Over the past 5 years, my administration has made more loans to small-business owners than any other. And when 98 percent of our exporters are small businesses, new trade partnerships with Europe and Asia—the Asia-Pacific will help them create more jobs. We need to work together on tools like bipartisan trade promotion authority to protect our workers, protect our environment, and open new markets to new goods stamped "Made in the U.S.A."

Listen, China and Europe aren't standing on the sidelines, and neither should we. We know that the nation that goes all-in on innovation today will own the global economy tomorrow. This is an edge America cannot surrender. Federally funded research helped lead to the ideas and inventions behind Google and smartphones. And that's why Congress should undo the damage done by last year's cuts to basic research so we can unleash the next great American discovery.

There are entire industries to be built based on vaccines that stay ahead of drug-resistant bacteria or paper-thin material that's stronger than steel. And let's pass a patent reform bill that allows our businesses to stay focused on innovation, not costly and needless litigation.

Now, one of the biggest factors in bringing more jobs back is our commitment to American energy. The all-of-the-above energy strategy I announced a few years ago is working, and today, America is closer to energy independence than we have been in decades.

One of the reasons why is natural gas. If extracted safely, it's the bridge fuel that can power our economy with less of the carbon pollution that causes climate change. Businesses plan to invest almost $100 billion in new factories that use natural gas. I'll cut redtape to help States get those factories built and put folks to work, and this Congress can help by putting people to work building fueling stations that shift more cars and trucks from foreign oil to American natural gas.

Meanwhile, my administration will keep working with the industry to sustain production and jobs growth while strengthening protection of our air, our water, our communities. And while we're at it, I'll use my authority to protect more of our pristine Federal lands for future generations.

Well, it's not just oil and natural gas production that's booming, we're becoming a global leader in solar too. Every 4 minutes, another American home or business goes solar, every panel pounded into place by a worker whose job cannot be outsourced. Let's continue that progress with a smarter tax policy that stops giving $4 billion a year to fossil fuel industries that don't need it so we can invest more in fuels of the future that do.

And even as we've increased energy production, we've partnered with businesses, builders, and local communities to reduce the energy we consume. When we rescued our automakers, for example, we worked with them to set higher fuel efficiency standards for our cars. In the coming months, I'll build on that success by setting new standards for our trucks so we can keep driving down oil imports and what we pay at the pump.

And taken together, our energy policy is creating jobs and leading to a cleaner, safer planet. Over the past 8 years, the United States has reduced our total carbon pollution more than any other nation on Earth. But we have to act with more urgency, because a changing climate is already harming Western communities struggling with drought and coastal cities dealing with floods. That's why I directed my administration to work with States, utilities, and others to set new standards on the amount of carbon pollution our power plants are allowed to dump into the air.

The shift to a cleaner energy economy won't happen overnight, and it will require some tough choices along the way. But the debate is settled. Climate change is a fact. And when our children's children look us in the eye and ask if we did all we could to leave them a safer, more stable world, with new sources of energy, I want us to be able to say, yes, we did.

Finally, if we're serious about economic growth, it is time to heed the call of business leaders, labor leaders, faith leaders, law enforcement and fix our broken immigration system. Republicans and Democrats in the Senate have acted, and I know that members of both parties in the House want to do the same. Independent economists say immigration reform will grow our economy and shrink our deficits by almost $1 trillion in the next two decades. And for good reason: When people come here to fulfill their dreams—to study, invent, contribute to our culture—they make our country a more attractive place for businesses to locate and create jobs for everybody. So let's

get immigration reform done this year. [*Applause*] Let's get it done. It's time.

The ideas I've outlined so far can speed up growth and create more jobs. But in this rapidly changing economy, we have to make sure that every American has the skills to fill those jobs. The good news is, we know how to do it.

Two years ago, as the auto industry came roaring back, Andra Rush opened up a manufacturing firm in Detroit. She knew that Ford needed parts for the best selling truck in America, and she knew how to make those parts. She just needed the workforce. So she dialed up what we call an American Job Center, places where folks can walk in to get the help or training they need to find a new job or a better job. She was flooded with new workers. And today, Detroit Manufacturing Systems has more than 700 employees. And what Andra and her employees experienced is how it should be for every employer and every job seeker.

So tonight I've asked Vice President Biden to lead an across-the-board reform of America's training programs to make sure they have one mission: train Americans with the skills employers need and match them to good jobs that need to be filled right now.

That means more on-the-job training and more apprenticeships that set a young worker on an upward trajectory for life. It means connecting companies to community colleges that can help design training to fill their specific needs. And if Congress wants to help, you can concentrate funding on proven programs that connect more ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs.

I'm also convinced we can help Americans return to the workforce faster by reforming unemployment insurance so that it's more effective in today's economy. But first, this Congress needs to restore the unemployment insurance you just let expire for 1.6 million people.

Let me tell you why. Misty DeMars is a mother of two young boys. She'd been steadily employed since she was a teenager, put herself through college. She'd never collected unemployment benefits, but she'd been paying taxes. In May, she and her husband used their life savings to buy their first home. A week later, budget cuts claimed the job she loved. Last month, when their unemployment insurance was cut off, she sat down and wrote me a letter, the kind I get every day. "We are the face of the unemployment crisis," she wrote. "I'm not dependent on the government. Our country depends on people like us who build careers, contribute to society, care about our neighbors. I'm confident that in time, I will find a job, I will pay my taxes, and we will raise our children in their own home in the community we love. Please give us this chance."

Congress, give these hard-working, responsible Americans that chance. Give them that chance. [*Applause*] Give them the chance. They need our help right now. But more important, this country needs them in the game. That's why I've been asking CEOs to give more long-term unemployed workers a fair shot at new jobs, a new chance to support their families. And in fact, this week, many will come to the White House to make that commitment real. Tonight I ask every business leader in America to join us and to do the same, because we are stronger when America fields a full team.

Of course, it's not enough to train today's workforce. We also have to prepare tomorrow's workforce, by guaranteeing every child access to a world-class education. Estiven Rodriguez couldn't speak a word of English when he moved to New York City at age 9. But last month, thanks to the support of great teachers and an innovative tutoring program, he led a march of his classmates through a crowd of cheering parents and neighbors from their high school to the post office, where they mailed off their college applications. And this son of a factory worker just found out, he's going to college this fall.

Five years ago, we set out to change the odds for all our kids. We worked with lenders to reform student loans, and today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before. Race to the Top, with the help of Governors from both parties, has helped States raise expectations and performance. Teachers

and principals in schools from Tennessee to Washington, DC, are making big strides in preparing students with the skills for the new economy: problem solving, critical thinking, science, technology, engineering, math.

Now, some of this change is hard. It requires everything from more challenging curriculums and more demanding parents to better support for teachers and new ways to measure how well our kids think, not how well they can fill in a bubble on a test. But it is worth it, and it is working. The problem is, we're still not reaching enough kids, and we're not reaching them in time. And that has to change.

Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child's life is high-quality early education. Last year, I asked this Congress to help States make high-quality pre-K available to every 4-year-old. And as a parent as well as a President, I repeat that request tonight. But in the meantime, 30 States have raised pre-K funding on their own. They know we can't wait. So just as we worked with States to reform our schools, this year, we'll invest in new partnerships with States and communities across the country in a Race to the Top for our youngest children. And as Congress decides what it's going to do, I'm going to pull together a coalition of elected officials, business leaders, and philanthropists willing to help more kids access the high-quality pre-K that they need. It is right for America. We need to get this done.

Last year, I also pledged to connect 99 percent of our students to high-speed broadband over the next 4 years. Tonight I can announce that with the support of the FCC and companies like Apple, Microsoft, Sprint, and Verizon, we've got a down payment to start connecting more than 15,000 schools and 20 million students over the next 2 years, without adding a dime to the deficit.

We're working to redesign high schools and partner them with colleges and employers that offer the real-world education and hands-on training that can lead directly to a job and career. We're shaking up our system of higher education to give parents more information and colleges more incentive to offer better value so that no middle class kid is priced out of a college education.

We're offering millions the opportunity to cap their monthly student loan payments to 10 percent of their income, and I want to work with Congress to see how we can help even more Americans who feel trapped by student loan debt. And I'm reaching out to some of America's leading foundations and corporations on a new initiative to help more young men of color facing especially tough odds to stay on track and reach their full potential.

The bottom line is, Michelle and I want every child to have the same chance this country gave us. But we know our opportunity agenda won't be complete, and too many young people entering the workforce today will see the American Dream as an empty promise, unless we also do more to make sure our economy honors the dignity of work and hard work pays off for every single American.

Today, women make up about half our workforce, but they still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. That is wrong, and in 2014, it's an embarrassment. Women deserve equal pay for equal work. She deserves to have a baby without sacrificing her job. A mother deserves a day off to care for a sick child or a sick parent without running into hardship. And you know what, a father does too. It is time to do away with workplace policies that belong in a "Mad Men" episode. [*Laughter*] This year, let's all come together—Congress, the White House, businesses from Wall Street to Main Street—to give every woman the opportunity she deserves. Because I believe when women succeed, America succeeds.

Now, women hold a majority of lower wage jobs, but they're not the only ones stifled by stagnant wages. Americans understand that some people will earn more money than others, and we don't resent those who, by virtue of their efforts, achieve incredible success. That's what America is all about. But Americans overwhelmingly agree that no one who works full-time should ever have to raise a family in poverty.

In the year since I asked this Congress to raise the minimum wage, five States have

passed laws to raise theirs. Many businesses have done it on their own. Nick Chute is here today with his boss, John Soranno. John's an owner of Punch Pizza in Minneapolis, and Nick helps make the dough. [*Laughter*] Only now he makes more of it. [*Laughter*] John just gave his employees a raise to 10 bucks an hour, and that's a decision that has eased their financial stress and boosted their morale.

Tonight I ask more of America's business leaders to follow John's lead: Do what you can to raise your employees' wages. It's good for the economy. It's good for America. To every mayor, Governor, State legislator in America, I say: You don't have to wait for Congress to act; Americans will support you if you take this on.

And as a chief executive, I intend to lead by example. Profitable corporations like Costco see higher wages as the smart way to boost productivity and reduce turnover. We should too. In the coming weeks, I will issue an Executive order requiring Federal contractors to pay their federally funded employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. Because if you cook our troops' meals or wash their dishes, you should not have to live in poverty.

Of course, to reach millions more, Congress does need to get on board. Today, the Federal minimum wage is worth about 20-percent less than it was when Ronald Reagan first stood here. And Tom Harkin and George Miller have a bill to fix that by lifting the minimum wage to $10.10. It's easy to remember: 10–10. This will help families. It will give businesses customers with more money to spend. It does not involve any new bureaucratic program. So join the rest of the country. Say yes. Give America a raise. Give them a raise.

There are other steps we can take to help families make ends meet, and few are more effective at reducing inequality and helping families pull themselves up through hard work than the earned-income tax credit. Right now it helps about half of all parents at some point. Think about that: It helps about half of all parents in America at some point in their lives. But I agree with Republicans like Senator Rubio that it doesn't do enough for single workers who don't have kids. So let's work together to strengthen the credit, reward work, help more Americans get ahead.

Let's do more to help Americans save for retirement. Today, most workers don't have a pension. A Social Security check often isn't enough on its own. And while the stock market has doubled over the last 5 years, that doesn't help folks who don't have 401(k)s. That's why, tomorrow, I will direct the Treasury to create a new way for working Americans to start their own retirement savings: MyRA.

It's a new savings bond that encourages folks to build a nest egg. MyRA guarantees a decent return with no risk of losing what you put in. And if this Congress wants to help, work with me to fix an upside-down Tax Code that gives big tax breaks to help the wealthy save, but does little or nothing for middle class Americans. Offer every American access to an automatic IRA on the job so they can save at work just like everybody in this Chamber can.

And since the most important investment many families make is their home, send me legislation that protects taxpayers from footing the bill for a housing crisis ever again and keeps the dream of home ownership alive for future generations.

One last point on financial security: For decades, few things exposed hard-working families to economic hardship more than a broken health care system. And in case you haven't heard, we're in the process of fixing that. Now, a preexisting condition used to mean that someone like Amanda Shelley, a physician's assistant and single mom from Arizona, couldn't get health insurance. But on January 1, she got covered. On January 3, she felt a sharp pain. On January 6, she had emergency surgery. Just one week earlier, Amanda said, and that surgery would have meant bankruptcy.

That's what health insurance reform is all about: the peace of mind that if misfortune strikes, you don't have to lose everything. Already, because of the Affordable Care Act, more than 3 million Americans under age 26 have gained coverage under their parent's plan. More than 9 million Americans have signed up for private health insurance or Medicaid coverage. Nine million.

And here's another number: zero. Because of this law, no American—none, zero—can ever again be dropped or denied coverage for a preexisting condition like asthma or back pain or cancer. No woman can ever be charged more just because she's a woman. And we did all this while adding years to Medicare's finances, keeping Medicare premiums flat, and lowering prescription costs for millions of seniors.

Now, I do not expect to convince my Republican friends on the merits of this law. [*Laughter*] But I know that the American people are not interested in refighting old battles. So again, if you have specific plans to cut costs, cover more people, increase choice, tell America what you'd do differently. Let's see if the numbers add up. But let's not have another 40-something votes to repeal a law that's already helping millions of Americans like Amanda. The first 40 were plenty. [*Laughter*]

We all owe it to the American people to say what we're for, not just what we're against. And if you want to know the real impact this law is having, just talk to Governor Steve Beshear of Kentucky, who's here tonight. Now, Kentucky is not the most liberal part of the country. That's not where I got my highest vote totals. [*Laughter*] But he's like a man possessed when it comes to covering his Commonwealth's families. They're our neighbors and our friends, he said: "They're people we shop and go to church with, farmers out on the tractor, grocery clerks. They're people who go to work every morning praying they don't get sick. No one deserves to live that way."

Steve's right. That's why tonight I ask every American who knows someone without health insurance to help them get covered by March 31. [*Applause*] Help them get covered. Moms, get on your kids to sign up. Kids, call your mom and walk her through the application. It will give her some peace of mind, and plus, she'll appreciate hearing from you. [*Laughter*]

After all, that's the spirit that has always moved this Nation forward. It's the spirit of citizenship, the recognition that through hard work and responsibility, we can pursue our individual dreams, but still come together as one American family to make sure the next generation can pursue its dreams as well.

Citizenship means standing up for everyone's right to vote. Last year, part of the Voting Rights Act was weakened, but conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats are working together to strengthen it. And the bipartisan Commission I appointed, chaired by my campaign lawyer and Governor Romney's campaign lawyer, came together and have offered reforms so that no one has to wait more than a half hour to vote. Let's support these efforts. It should be the power of our vote, not the size of our bank accounts, that drives our democracy.

Citizenship means standing up for the lives that gun violence steals from us each day. I've seen the courage of parents, students, pastors, police officers all over this country who say, "We are not afraid." And I intend to keep trying, with or without Congress, to help stop more tragedies from visiting innocent Americans in our movie theaters, in our shopping malls, or schools like Sandy Hook.

Citizenship demands a sense of common purpose, participation in the hard work of self-government, an obligation to serve our communities. And I know this Chamber agrees that few Americans give more to their country than our diplomats and the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. Thank you.

Tonight, because of the extraordinary troops and civilians who risk and lay down their lives to keep us free, the United States is more secure. When I took office, nearly 180,000 Americans were serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, all our troops are out of Iraq. More than 60,000 of our troops have already come home from Afghanistan. With Afghan forces now in the lead for their own security, our troops have moved to a support role. Together with our allies, we will complete our mission there by the end of this year, and America's longest war will finally be over.

After 2014, we will support a unified Afghanistan as it takes responsibility for its own future. If the Afghan Government signs a security agreement that we have negotiated, a small force of Americans could remain in Afghanistan with NATO allies to carry out two narrow

missions: training and assisting Afghan forces and counterterrorism operations to pursue any remnants of Al Qaida. For while our relationship with Afghanistan will change, one thing will not: our resolve that terrorists do not launch attacks against our country.

The fact is, that danger remains. While we've put Al Qaida's core leadership on a path to defeat, the threat has evolved as Al Qaida affiliates and other extremists take root in different parts of the world. In Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, Mali, we have to keep working with partners to disrupt and disable those networks. In Syria, we'll support the opposition that rejects the agenda of terrorist networks. Here at home, we'll keep strengthening our defenses and combat new threats like cyber attacks. And as we reform our defense budget, we will have to keep faith with our men and women in uniform and invest in the capabilities they need to succeed in future missions.

We have to remain vigilant. But I strongly believe our leadership and our security cannot depend on our outstanding military alone. As Commander in Chief, I have used force when needed to protect the American people, and I will never hesitate to do so as long as I hold this office. But I will not send our troops into harm's way unless it is truly necessary, nor will I allow our sons and daughters to be mired in open-ended conflicts. We must fight the battles that need to be fought, not those that terrorists prefer from us: large-scale deployments that drain our strength and may ultimately feed extremism.

So even as we actively and aggressively pursue terrorist networks through more targeted efforts and by building the capacity of our foreign partners, America must move off a permanent war footing. That's why I've imposed prudent limits on the use of drones. For we will not be safer if people abroad believe we strike within their countries without regard for the consequence.

That's why, working with this Congress, I will reform our surveillance programs, because the vital work of our intelligence community depends on public confidence, here and abroad, that privacy of ordinary people is not being violated.

And with the Afghan war ending, this needs to be the year Congress lifts the remaining restrictions on detainee transfers and we close the prison at Guantanamo Bay. Because we counter terrorism not just through intelligence and military actions, but by remaining true to our constitutional ideals and setting an example for the rest of the world.

You see, in a world of complex threats, our security, our leadership, depends on all elements of our power, including strong and principled diplomacy. American diplomacy has rallied more than 50 countries to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands and allowed us to reduce our own reliance on cold war stockpiles. American diplomacy, backed by the threat of force, is why Syria's chemical weapons are being eliminated.

And we will continue to work with the international community to usher in the future the Syrian people deserve, a future free of dictatorship, terror, and fear. As we speak, American diplomacy is supporting Israelis and Palestinians as they engage in the difficult but necessary talks to end the conflict there, to achieve dignity and an independent state for Palestinians and lasting peace and security for the State of Israel, a Jewish state that knows America will always be at their side.

And it is American diplomacy, backed by pressure, that has halted the progress of Iran's nuclear program and rolled back parts of that program for the very first time in a decade. As we gather here tonight, Iran has begun to eliminate its stockpile of higher levels of enriched uranium. It's not installing advanced centrifuges. Unprecedented inspections help the world verify every day that Iran is not building a bomb. And with our allies and partners, we're engaged in negotiations to see if we can peacefully achieve a goal we all share: preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

These negotiations will be difficult. They may not succeed. We are clear eyed about Iran's support for terrorist organizations like Hizballah, which threatens our allies. And we're clear about the mistrust between our na-

tions, mistrust that cannot be wished away. But these negotiations don't rely on trust. Any long-term deal we agree to must be based on verifiable action that convinces us and the international community that Iran is not building a nuclear bomb. If John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan could negotiate with the Soviet Union, then surely a strong and confident America can negotiate with less powerful adversaries today.

The sanctions that we put in place helped make this opportunity possible. But let me be clear: If this Congress sends me a new sanctions bill now that threatens to derail these talks, I will veto it. For the sake of our national security, we must give diplomacy a chance to succeed. If Iran's leaders do not seize this opportunity, then I will be the first to call for more sanctions and stand ready to exercise all options to make sure Iran does not build a nuclear weapon. But if Iran's leaders do seize the chance—and we'll know soon enough—then Iran could take an important step to rejoin the community of nations, and we will have resolved one of the leading security challenges of our time without the risks of war.

Now, finally, let's remember that our leadership is defined not just by our defense against threats, but by the enormous opportunities to do good and promote understanding around the globe: to forge greater cooperation, to expand new markets, to free people from fear and want. And no one is better positioned to take advantage of those opportunities than America.

Our alliance with Europe remains the strongest the world has ever known. From Tunisia to Burma, we're supporting those who are willing to do the hard work of building democracy. In Ukraine, we stand for the principle that all people have the right to express themselves freely and peacefully and to have a say in their country's future. Across Africa, we're bringing together businesses and governments to double access to electricity and help end extreme poverty. In the Americas, we're building new ties of commerce, but we're also expanding cultural and educational exchanges among young people. And we will continue to focus on the Asia-Pacific, where we support our allies, shape a future of greater security and prosperity, and extend a hand to those devastated by disaster, as we did in the Philippines, when our Marines and civilians rushed to aid those battered by a typhoon, and who were greeted with words like, "We will never forget your kindness" and "God bless America."

We do these things because they help promote our long-term security, and we do them because we believe in the inherent dignity and equality of every human being, regardless of race or religion, creed or sexual orientation. And next week, the world will see one expression of that commitment, when Team U.S.A. marches the red, white, and blue into the Olympic Stadium and brings home the gold. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. My fellow Americans, no other country in the world does what we do. On every issue, the world turns to us, not simply because of the size of our economy or our military might, but because of the ideals we stand for and the burdens we bear to advance them. No one knows this better than those who serve in uniform.

As this time of war draws to a close, a new generation of heroes returns to civilian life. We'll keep slashing that backlog so our veterans receive the benefits they've earned and our wounded warriors receive the health care—including the mental health care—that they need. We'll keep working to help all our veterans translate their skills and leadership into jobs here at home. And we will all continue to join forces to honor and support our remarkable military families.

Let me tell you about one of those families I've come to know. I first met Cory Remsburg, a proud Army Ranger, at Omaha Beach on the 65th anniversary of D-day. Along with some of his fellow Rangers, he walked me through the program and the ceremony. He was a strong, impressive young man, had an easy manner, he was sharp as a tack. And we joked around and took pictures, and I told him to stay in touch.

A few months later, on his 10th deployment, Cory was nearly killed by a massive roadside bomb in Afghanistan. His comrades found him

in a canal, face down, underwater, shrapnel in his brain. For months, he lay in a coma. And the next time I met him, in the hospital, he couldn't speak, could barely move. Over the years, he's endured dozens of surgeries and procedures, hours of grueling rehab every day.

Even now, Cory is still blind in one eye, still struggles on his left side. But slowly, steadily, with the support of caregivers like his dad Craig and the community around him, Cory has grown stronger. And day by day, he's learned to speak again and stand again and walk again. And he's working toward the day when he can serve his country again. "My recovery has not been easy," he says. "Nothing in life that's worth anything is easy."

Cory is here tonight. And like the Army he loves, like the America he serves, Sergeant First Class Cory Remsburg never gives up, and he does not quit. Cory.

My fellow Americans, men and women like Cory remind us that America has never come easy. Our freedom, our democracy, has never been easy. Sometimes, we stumble, we make mistakes; we get frustrated or discouraged. But for more than 200 years, we have put those things aside and placed our collective shoulder to the wheel of progress: to create and build and expand the possibilities of individual achievement, to free other nations from tyranny and fear, to promote justice and fairness and equality under the law so that the words set to paper by our Founders are made real for every citizen. The America we want for our kids—a rising America where honest work is plentiful and communities are strong, where prosperity is widely shared and opportunity for all lets us go as far as our dreams and toil will take us—none of it is easy. But if we work together—if we summon what is best in us, the way Cory summoned what is best in him—with our feet planted firmly in today, but our eyes cast toward tomorrow, I know it is within our reach. Believe it.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. in the House Chamber of the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; Mary T. Barra, chief executive officer, General Motors Co.; Andra M. Rush, president and chief executive officer, Detroit Manufacturing Systems; Oak Park, IL, resident Misty DeMars and her husband, Leighton Taylor; Estiven Rodriguez, student, Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School in New York City; Gilbert, AZ, resident Amanda Shelley; former White House Counsel Robert F. Bauer and Benjamin L. Ginsberg, partner, Patton Boggs LLP, in their capacity as Cochairs of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration; and 2012 Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at the Costco Wholesale Corporation's Woodmore Towne Centre Warehouse in Glenarden, Maryland
January 29, 2014

Hello, Maryland! Well, it's good to see you. I love getting outside the Beltway, even if it is just a few hundred feet away. [*Laughter*]

Well, first of all, give Teressa a great big round of applause for the great job she did. I don't know where she—[*applause*]. The—it is good to be here with all of you. I want to acknowledge a champion for working families right here in Maryland, Governor Martin O'Malley. Some folks who go to bat for working people every single day: Senator Ben Cardin is here; Congresswoman Donna Edwards is here. And all of you are here.

Teressa's story proves that treating workers well is not just the right thing to do, it is an investment. And Teressa's 27 years of hard work at Costco proves that investment pays off. I talked a little bit about this last night in my State of the Union Address. Now, I only finished 12 hours ago, so these remarks will be quicker. [*Laughter*] And I need some time to pick up a snow shovel and one of those 50-

pound bags of dog food for Bo and Sunny. I was told I could get a big-screen TV too for the Super Bowl coming up.

Audience member. What size can I get for you, sir?

The President. The 80-inch. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Say 60 is not enough, huh? Got to go 80. [*Laughter*]

It is funny, though, I was looking—you can buy a sofa, a—chocolate chip cookies, and a snorkel set all in the same—[*laughter*]. The sofa didn't surprise me, but the snorkel set—[*laughter*]—now, that was impressive. Although, I do want to ask, who's snorkeling right now? [*Laughter*] How many of those are you guys selling? You never know. [*Laughter*]

But what I talked about last night was a simple but profound idea, and it's an idea that's at the heart of who we are as Americans: opportunity for everybody, giving everybody a fair chance. If they're willing to work hard, take responsibility, give them a shot. The idea that no matter who you are, where you come from, what you look like, what your last name is, if you work hard, you live up to your responsibilities, you can succeed, you can support a family. That's what America should be about. Nobody is looking for a free lunch, but give people a chance. And if they're working hard, make sure they can support a family.

Now, we're at a moment where businesses all across the country, businesses like Costco, have created 8 million new jobs over the last 4 years. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in more than 5 years. Our deficits have been cut in half. Housing is rebounding. Manufacturing is adding jobs for the first time since the nineties. We sell more of what we make here in America to other places than ever before. Business leaders are deciding that China's not the best place to invest and create jobs, America is.

So we—this could be a breakthrough year for America. After 5 years of hard work, overcoming the worst recession in our lifetimes, we're better positioned for this young century than anybody else. But the question for folks in Washington is whether they're going to help that progress or hinder that progress; whether they're going to waste time creating new crises for people and new uncertainty—like the shutdown—or are we going to spend time creating new jobs and new opportunities.

And I know what I'm choosing to do, because it's what you do: I'm choosing this to be a year of action. Because too many Americans are working harder than ever just to get by, much less get ahead. The scars of the recession are real. The middle class has been taking it on the chin since before the recession. The economy has been growing for 4 years now. Corporate profits, stock prices have all soared. But the wages and incomes of ordinary people haven't gone up in over a decade.

So that's why last night, I laid out some steps that we can take—concrete, commonsense proposals—to speed up economic growth, strengthen the middle class, build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class.

And this opportunity agenda has four parts. Number one, we need more new jobs. Number two, we need to train more Americans with the job—with the skills that they need to fill those jobs. Number three, we should guarantee every child access to a world-class education. And number four, let's make sure hard work pays off.

Now, some of my ideas, I'll need Congress. But America can't just stand still if Congress isn't doing anything. I'm not going to stand still either. Wherever I can take steps to expand opportunity for more families, I'm going to do it, with or without Congress. Because the defining project of our time, of our generation, is to restore opportunity for everybody. And so I'm here at Costco today to talk about the fourth part of the opportunity agenda, and that is, making hard work pay off for every single American.

Five years ago I signed my first bill into law. I didn't have any gray hair. [*Laughter*] And—you think it's distinguished? Okay. [*Laughter*] That's the guy with the gray beard saying—[*laughter*]. So this first bill that I signed was called the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Lilly was at my speech last night. And it's a law to help protect a woman's right to fair pay. But at

a time when women make about—make up about half of the workforce, but still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns, we've got to finish the job and give women the tools they need to fight for equal pay. Women deserve equal pay for equal work. They deserve—if they're having a baby, they shouldn't have to sacrifice their job. A mom deserves a day off to care for a sick child or a sick parent, and a father does too.

As I said last night, we've got to get rid of these—some of these workplace policies that belong in a "Mad Men" episode, belong back in the fifties. We've got to give every woman the opportunity she deserves. Because when women succeed, America succeeds.

Now, women happen to hold a majority of lower wage jobs in America. But they're not the only ones who are stifled when wages aren't going up. As Americans, we understand some people are going to earn more than other people, and we don't resent those who because they work hard, because they come up with a new idea, they achieve incredible success. We want our kids to be successful.

And it's funny, Michelle and I sometimes talk—Michelle's dad was a blue-collar worker; her mom was a secretary. I was raised by a single mom. We didn't go around when we were growing up being jealous about folks who had made a lot of money, as long as—if we were working hard, we could have enough. So Americans overwhelmingly agree, nobody who works full-time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. And that is why I firmly believe it's time to give America a raise.

A hundred years ago, Henry Ford started Ford Motor Company. Model T, you remember all that? Henry Ford realized he could sell more cars if his workers made enough money to buy the cars. He had started this—factories and mass production and all that, but then he realized, if my workers aren't getting paid, they won't be able to buy the cars, and then I can't make a profit and reinvest to hire more workers. But if I pay my workers a good wage, they can buy my product, I make more cars. Ultimately, I'll make more money, they've got more money in their pockets, so it's a win-win for everybody.

And leaders today—business leaders today, some of them understand this same concept. Now, Costco's CEO, Craig Jelinek, he understands this. He feels the same way. He knows that Costco is going to do better—all our businesses do better—when customers have more money to spend. And listen, Craig is a wonderful guy, but he's not in this for philanthropy. He's a businessman. He's looking at the bottom line. But he sees that if he's doing right by Costco's workers, then they can buy that 80-inch TV too. [*Laughter*] Right?

Profitable corporations like Costco see higher wages as a smart way to boost productivity and to reduce turnover. So entry-level employees here—stock associates, cashiers—start at $11.50 an hour. Start at $11.50 an hour.

Audience member. Mr. President, we love you!

The President. Thank you.

The average hourly wage is more than $20, not including overtime or benefits. And Costco's commitment to fairness doesn't stop at the checkout counter, it extends down the supply chain, including to many of the farm workers who grow the product—the produce that you sell.

Now, what this means is that Costco has some of the lowest employee turnover in your industry. So you're not constantly retraining folks because they quit. You got people like Teressa who's been here 27 years because it's a company that's looking out for workers. And I've got to tell you, when I walk around, just—I had a little tour of the produce section, the bakery—you could just tell people feel good about their job and they feel good about the company and you have a good atmosphere and the managers and people all take pride in what you do.

Now, folks who work at Costco understand that, but there are a lot of Americans who don't work somewhere like Costco, and they're working for wages that don't go as far as they once did. Today, the minimum wage—the Federal minimum wage doesn't even go as far as it did back in the 1950s. And as the cost of

living goes up, the value of the minimum wage goes down over time. Just last year alone, workers earning the minimum wage basically got the equivalent of a $200 pay cut because the minimum wage stayed the same, but costs of everything else are going up.

I don't need to tell you this. You go shopping. [*Laughter*] So you're like, mm-hmm. [*Laughter*] Mm-hmm. [*Laughter*] For a typical minimum-wage worker, that's a month's worth of groceries. It's 2 months of electricity. It's a big deal to a lot of families.

So I brought a guy here today who knows a little bit about this: Tom Perez is America's Secretary of Labor—[*applause*]—works for working families every day. I stole him from Governor O'Malley. [*Laughter*] He's—he came here from Maryland. But when he was Governor O'Malley's labor secretary here in Maryland, he helped implement the country's first statewide living wage law. And that helped a lot of Maryland families. But there are more families in Maryland and across the country who put in long days, they've got hard jobs; they deserve higher wages.

And in the year since I first asked Congress to raise the Federal minimum wage, five States have passed laws to raise theirs. Governor O'Malley is trying to do it here in Maryland and lift the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. He says, "We all do better when we're all doing better." He's right. Prince George's County, Montgomery County are banding together with DC to raise the regional minimum wage. And I'm here to support your efforts. [*Applause*] I'm here to support your efforts. And as I said last night, to every Governor, mayor, State legislator out there, if you want to take the initiative to raise your minimum wage laws to help more hard-working Americans make ends meet, then I'm going to be right there at your side.

While Congress decides whether it's going to raise the minimum wage or not, people outside Washington are not waiting for Congress. And I'm not either. So as a chief executive, I'm going to lead by example. In the coming weeks, I will issue an Executive order requiring Federal contractors to pay their federally funded employees on new contracts a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. Because if you cook our troops' meals, wash their dishes, you shouldn't have to live in poverty.

So there's some steps businesses are taking on their own. There are steps that certain States and counties and cities are taking on their own. There are steps I'm going to take as President. But ultimately, Congress does have to do its part to catch up to the rest of the country on this.

And there's a reason why a wide majority of Americans support increasing the minimum wage. Look, most Americans who are working make more than the minimum wage. So it's interesting that the overwhelming number of Americans support raising the minimum wage. It's not that it's going to necessarily affect them personally right now, it's that they know, they understand, the value behind the minimum wage. If you work hard, you should be able to pay your rent, buy your groceries, look after your kids. If you put in a hard day's work, you deserve decent pay for it. That's a principle everybody understands, everybody believes.

So right now in Congress, there's a bill that would lift the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. Ten-ten. Ten-ten, it's easy. [*Laughter*] It will give more businesses more customers with more money to spend. I guarantee you, if workers have a little more money in their pocket, they'll spend more at Costco. And if Costco is seeing more customers, they'll hire some more folk. Everybody does better.

And the thing about it is, raising the minimum wage doesn't require new spending by the Federal Government. It doesn't require a big bureaucratic program. It would help a lot of Americans make ends meet.

So I need everybody here and everybody who's going to be watching, tell Congress to make this happen. Give America a raise. Making work pay means doing more to help Americans all across this country, but it also means improving the economy. Because one of the things that's been holding our economy back is wages and incomes being flat, which means consumers aren't spending as much, which means businesses don't have as many

customers, which means they don't hire as much and they don't invest as much, and we don't get that lift-off on the economy that we could.

If we want to make work pay, we also have to help Americans save for retirement, and I'm going to be flying up to Pittsburgh this afternoon to talk about that. Making work pay means access to health care that's there when you get sick. And the Affordable Care Act means nobody can ever be dropped or denied coverage for a preexisting condition like asthma or cancer. You can't be charged more if you're a woman. You can't be charged just because your job makes your back hurt sometimes. Those days are over. [*Laughter*]

More Americans are signing up for new private health insurance plans every day. Already, 3 million people have signed up. So if you know somebody who isn't covered, who doesn't have health insurance, call them up, sit them down, help them get covered at healthcare.gov by March 31.

So this is the opportunity agenda that I'm going to be talking about this year. I don't know—I hope Congress will be talking about it too. But I'm not going to wait. Because we've got to restore some economic security in a 21st-century economy, and that means jobs that are more plentiful, skills that are more employable, savings that are more portable, health care that's yours and can't be canceled if you get sick.

I just focused on one piece of that opportunity agenda today: raising the minimum wage. But these are real, practical, achievable solutions that can help shift the odds back in favor of working and middle class Americans who haven't been seeing some of the benefits of growth that we've seen over the last 4 years.

And before I grab a 10-pound barrel of pretzels and—[*laughter*]—500 golf balls—[*laughter*]—let me just leave you with something I heard from Costco's founder, Jim Sinegal, who's been a great friend of mine and somebody who I greatly admire. And Jim is rightly proud of everything he's accomplished. "But," he said, "here's the thing about the Costco story. We did not build our company in a vacuum. We built it in the greatest country on Earth. We built our company in a place where anyone can make it with hard work, a little luck, and a little help from their neighbors and their country."

That's what Jim said, a place where anyone can make it. That's who we are. That's our story. If we pull together, work together, put our shoulder to the wheel, keep moving forward, that's going to be our future as well and the future for our kids and our grandkids.

Thanks so much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Teressa Allen, assistant general manager, Costco's Woodmore Towne Centre Warehouse, who introduced the President; and Lilly Ledbetter, former employee, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. plant in Gadsden, AL. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Remarks at the United States Steel Corporation Mon Valley Works Irvin Plant in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania
January 29, 2014

Hey! Hello, everybody. Well, thank you, Mario, for that great introduction and your leadership. You just don't come to the Steel City without coming to U.S. Steel. I just got a great tour and had a chance to see a little bit about how you guys build America every single day. And I could not be prouder to be here.

I brought a few friends with me. We've got America's Treasury Secretary, Jack Lew. We've got a couple of guys who wake up and go to bat for Pennsylvania workers every single day, Senator Bob Casey and Congressman Mike Doyle. We've got the mayor of West Mifflin, Chris Kelly, in the house. Pittsburgh's new

mayor, Bill Peduto, is here. And we've got Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. And then we've got one of my good buddies who is always in my ear about working people—and I love this guy—the international president of the United Steelworkers, Leo Gerard, is here. And I also brought along our great friend, our former Ambassador to Ireland, and most importantly, chairman of the Pittsburgh Steelers, Dan Rooney in the house.

Now, most of all, it's great to be here with the men and women of U.S. Steel. This company helped build America, and over a hundred years later, you're still at it. You forge the pipes that transport cleaner burning natural gas. You manufacture the lightweight alloys that our automakers use to build fuel-efficient cars. You're part of one of the great turnaround stories of this economic recovery, the rebound of the American steel industry. And look, just every time I go to a steel plant, I remember, being a steelworker is hard work. But every single one of you is doing your part to make the country stronger.

And because of your efforts, businesses like U.S. Steel have now created 8 million new jobs over the past 4 years, 9,000 new jobs in the steel industry alone. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in more than 5 years. Our deficits have been cut in half. Housing is rebounding. Manufacturing is adding jobs, not shrinking jobs, for the first time since the 1990s. We sell more of what we make here in America to other parts of the world than ever before. Business leaders are starting to realize that China is no longer the best place to invest and create jobs, America is—the U.S. of A.—which is why I said last night I believe this can be a breakthrough year for America.

After 5 years of hard work, after everything we did to dig ourselves out of the worst recession of our lifetimes, we're better positioned in this 21st century than any other country on Earth. And the question I posed to Congress yesterday is whether folks in Washington are going to help or they're going to hinder the progress we've been making, whether they're going to waste time creating new crises that slows down our economy or they're going to spend time creating new jobs and new opportunities?

And I don't know what their plans are, but I choose a year of action. Because too many Americans are working harder than ever just to get by, let alone get ahead. They still have the scars of the recession. But the truth is, the middle class have been taking it on the chin since way before the financial crisis hit. You know that. The economy now has been growing for 4 years. Corporate profits, stock prices, they've gone up, but folks' wages haven't risen in over a decade.

And that's why last night I laid out new steps we can take right now to speed up economic growth, strengthen the middle class, and build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class. It's an opportunity agenda, because opportunity is what America is all about. And the agenda has four parts. Number one, more new jobs: jobs in American manufacturing, jobs in American energy, jobs in American innovation and technology. Number two, we've got to train more Americans with the skills that we need to fill those jobs. Number three, we've got to guarantee every child in America a world-class education. And number four, we've got to make sure hard work pays off.

Now, some of these ideas that I presented last night are going to require Congress to pass legislation. But America doesn't stand still. U.S. Steel hasn't stood still. I'm not going to stand still. So wherever I can take steps to expand opportunity for more families, regardless of what Congress does, that's what I'm going to do, because I am determined to work with all of you and citizens all across this country on the defining project of our generation, and that is to restore opportunity for every single person who is willing to work hard and take responsibility in this country. That's what I'm committed to doing.

Now, I've come to U.S. Steel today because I want to talk about the fourth part of that opportunity agenda, making hard work pay off for every single American: making sure jobs pay good wages, making sure affordable health care is there when you need it, making sure

that after a lifetime of hard work you can retire with some dignity.

Today, women make up about half our workforce, but they still make 77 cents for every dollar a man makes. And as I said last night, that's wrong. In 2014, it is an embarrassment. Women deserve equal pay for equal work. They deserve to be able to have a baby without sacrificing a job. Moms and dads deserve to be able to take a day off for a sick kid or a sick parent. We've got to get rid of some of these workplace policies that belong back in the fifties, back in a "Mad Men" episode, I said. [*Laughter*] We've got to give every woman the opportunity she deserves, because when women succeed, America succeeds. And I'm really proud that there's a woman who is heading up this plant and doing some amazing work. So I was really glad to see that.

But women hold the majority of lower wage jobs. And they're not the only ones who have been stifled by stagnant wages. The truth is, wages and incomes for the average working American haven't gone up. Even though the economy is more productive, even though it's grown over the last two decades, the average person's salary—what they're taking home, their paycheck—it hasn't really grown. Now, Americans understand, we all understand, some people are going to earn more money than others. And we don't envy anybody who achieves success through their hard work. That's what we want for our kids.

Michelle and I were talking. Michelle's dad was a blue-collar worker, worked at a water filtration plant in Chicago. Her mom was a secretary. My mom was a single mom. When we were growing up, we weren't worrying about what rich people were doing. We weren't going around saying, oh, man, we don't have caviar for lunch—[*laughter*]—and we're not vacationing down in some fancy place. We don't begrudge success to other folks. But we did expect—and I think most Americans still expect—that if you work hard, you should be able to make it. You don't have to make it the way some folks make it, but everybody should have enough to feel some security.

And Americans overwhelmingly agree that nobody who works full time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. If you're doing your responsibilities and working hard, you should be able to pay the rent, buy food, look after your family.

Now, today, the Federal minimum wage doesn't go as far as it did even in the 1950s. That's why some States and cities are raising their minimum wages on their own. And I support their efforts. And as I mentioned last night, as a chief executive, I'm going to lead by example. In the coming weeks, I'm issuing an Executive order requiring Federal contractors, folks doing business with the Federal Government, pay your federally funded employees a fair wage of at least 10 bucks and 10 cents an hour, because if you cook our troops' meals or you wash their dishes, you shouldn't have to live in poverty.

Of course, if we're going to reach millions more, then Congress is going to have to get on board. There's a bill in Congress right now to wage—that minimum wage to 10 bucks and 10 cents an hour. And I told Congress, say yes to that. Give America a raise.

But that's not all we have to do to grow our middle class. Making work pay also means access to health care that's there for you when you get sick. Now, the good news is if you work here at U.S. Steel, I know you've got good benefits. And that's why I'm a strong supporter of unions, because they fought for those benefits.

But as everybody here knows—and I'll bet you've got friends and family who haven't been so lucky and don't have those benefits. And what the Affordable Care Act means is that no one can ever again be dropped or denied coverage for a preexisting like—condition like asthma or cancer. You can't be charged more if you're a woman. You can't be charged more just because forging steel might hurt your backs, make it hurt sometimes. And if you don't have health insurance on the job, you can actually get affordable health insurance.

So the days when folks are just on their own, out of luck, those days are over. More Americans are signing up for new private health insurance plans every day. We're signing folks up

for Medicaid. And if you know somebody who isn't covered, call them up, sit them down, help them get covered at healthcare.gov by March 31. We are going to get all of America covered. That's one of my commitments.

And finally—and that's what this little desk here is about—there's another thing we can all agree on. If you've worked hard all your life, you deserve a secure retirement. Some of the folks I met before I came here on the tour, some of these folks have been on the job 15 years, 20 years. I think your roller has been on the job 38 years. Let me tell you something, if you work 38 years, at the end of it, you should feel like you're going to retire with some security.

And a retirement used to be a three-legged stool. You used to have a pension, then you had your Social Security, then you had your own private savings. Right? And you put that all together, and you could retire. But today, most workers don't have a pension in America. Just half work for an employer that offers any kind of retirement plan. Social Security check is critical, but oftentimes, that monthly check, that's not enough. And while the stock market has doubled over the last 5 years, that doesn't help somebody if you don't have a 401(k).

So what I've asked Congress to do is work with me to give more people more retirement security. Let's fix an upside-down Tax Code that right now gives the wealthiest Americans big tax breaks to save, but does almost nothing for middle class folks, doesn't give them the same kinds of tax advantages. That's not fair. And we need to give every American access to an automatic IRA on the job so they can save at work.

Now, I'm hoping that Congress goes along with this, but I'm not going to wait for Congress. I could do more with Congress, but I'm not going to not do anything without Congress, not when it's about the basic security and dignity of American workers. So here's what I'm going to do today. This is what this little table is set up for. I'm going to sign a Presidential memorandum that directs the U.S. Treasury Secretary, Jack Lew, to create a new way for working Americans to start their own retirement savings. And as soon as I sign this, Jack Lew will get the memo. He is right here. So I'm going to be able to just—here, here's your memo.

And we're calling it "MyRA." Not IRA, MyRA. And what it is, it's a new type of savings bond that we can set up without legislation that encourages Americans to begin to build a nest egg. And it's simple. Workers can contribute through automatic deductions in their paychecks, just like those of you who have an employer-sponsored pension fund can do. They can keep the same account even if they change jobs, so they can carry it over. It's safe. These accounts balance—account balances will never go down in value. They're backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government. And it's affordable. So you can open an account with as little as $25. You can contribute as little as $5 at a time.

But what that means is, for those of you who don't have a 401(k) on the job, don't have a pension on the job, don't have a mechanism to start saving—especially younger workers—you can get started now. And in an emergency, you can withdraw contributions without paying a penalty. So it's a pretty good deal. And what I'm hoping is that working Americans will take a look, because I want more people to have the chance to save for retirement through their hard work. And this is just one step that we can take to help more people do that.

So this is the opportunity agenda that's going to help restore some sense of economic security in this 21st-century economy. We want jobs that are more plentiful. We want skills that keep you employable. We want savings that are portable. We want health care that's yours and that's not going to be canceled when you really need it. We want every American who works hard and takes responsibility to retire with dignity after decades of honest work. These are real, practical, achievable solutions to help shift the odds back a little bit in favor of more working and middle class Americans, so that if they work hard, they can get ahead, and they can leave something for the next generation.

And that's something that U.S. Steel knows a little bit about. For over a hundred years,

people throughout the Mon Valley and across this country have been punching in at plants just like this one. You've been keeping the furnaces blasting, keeping the cold mill rolling, carrying on the tradition of hard work and determination. We've got two-, three-generation steelworkers at this plant right here. And I know for a lot of you, this is more than a job. This is a team. This is a family that you're proud to be a part of.

Now, Robin Birk is with me today. Decades ago, her granddad worked for Union Switch and Signal in Pittsburgh, making parts for railroads. Her dad worked for U.S. Steel for over 30 years, rising to plant manager. Robin's been a safety manager here for 23 years. And I want to share something Robin said. She said: "When I was growing up, I would think about what my grandfather and father did for a living, and I always thought my brother would be the one who got to work here. But it ended up being me. Women before me maybe didn't have that opportunity."

Now, Robin's dad Bernard, who just passed away a little more than a year ago, he was full of pride for this company. He used to say, "When we bleed, we bleed blue"—the color of U.S. Steel.

So that pride has run across generation. That's the pride that built this company. And that's the pride that built America. That's the spirit we all need today. That's the resilience, the grit, the determination, and the optimism that keeps the American Dream alive not just for this generation, but for future generations to come.

That's what I'm going to be fighting for this year, just like I was for the last 5 years, and for the next 3 years. And I expect all of you to join me in making sure that we deliver that promise to the next generation.

And now I'm going to sign this bill. Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

[*At this point, the President signed a memorandum on retirement savings security.*]

It's done. I'm going to give it to Jack right now. Here's Jack Lew. I'm going to give it to him. We're going to get it started. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mario Longhi, president and chief executive officer, U.S. Steel Corp.; Leo W. Gerard, international president, United Steelworkers; and Amy Smith-Yoder, plant manager, John Trainer, cold reduction mill roller, and Robin E. Birk, safety and industrial hygiene department manager, U.S. Steel Corp. Mon Valley Works Irvin Plant. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Third Amendment to the Agreement for Co-operation Between the United States of America and the International Atomic Energy Agency
January 29, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153(b), (d)) (the "Act"), the text of a proposed Third Amendment to the Agreement for Co-operation Between the United States of America and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (the "Amendment"). I am also pleased to transmit my written approval, authorization, and determination concerning the Amendment, and an unclassified Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement (NPAS) concerning the Amendment. (In accordance with section 123 of the Act, as amended by title XII of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–277), a classi-

fied annex to the NPAS, prepared by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, summarizing relevant classified information, will be submitted to the Congress separately.) The joint memorandum submitted to me by the Secretaries of State and Energy and a letter from the Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission stating the views of the Commission are also enclosed. An addendum to the NPAS pursuant to section 102A of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 403–1), as amended, is being submitted separately by the Director of National Intelligence.

The proposed Amendment has been negotiated in accordance with the Act and other applicable law. In my judgment, it meets all applicable statutory requirements and will advance the nonproliferation and other foreign policy interests of the United States.

Pursuant to the proposed Amendment, the Agreement for Co-operation Between the United States of America and the International Atomic Energy Agency, signed at Vienna May 11, 1959, as amended and extended February 12, 1974, and January 14, 1980 (the "Agreement"), would continue to provide a comprehensive framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation with the IAEA and facilitate our mutual objectives related to nonproliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The primary purposes of the Agreement are to enable exports from the United States of nuclear material and equipment to IAEA Member States for research reactors and, in certain cases, for power reactors, and to enable transfers from the United States of small samples of nuclear material to the IAEA for safeguards and research purposes.

Under the proposed Amendment, the term of the Agreement will be extended an additional 40 years for a total term of 95 years.

The Agreement permits the transfer of material, equipment (including reactors), and facilities for nuclear research and nuclear power production. It does not permit transfers of Restricted Data, sensitive nuclear facilities, or major critical components of such facilities, or, unless specifically provided for in a supply agreement or an amendment thereto, transfers of sensitive nuclear technology. In the event of termination of the Agreement, key nonproliferation conditions and controls continue with respect to material, equipment, and facilities subject to the Agreement.

A more detailed discussion of the IAEA's nuclear nonproliferation and peaceful uses activities is provided in the NPAS and in a classified annex to the NPAS submitted to you separately.

I have considered the views and recommendations of the interested agencies in reviewing the proposed Amendment to the Agreement and have determined that its performance will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved the Amendment and authorized its execution and urge that the Congress give it favorable consideration.

This transmission shall constitute a submittal for purposes of both sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Act. My Administration is prepared to begin immediately the consultations with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee as provided in section 123 b. Upon completion of the 30 days of continuous session review provided for in section 123 b., the 60 days of continuous session review provided for in section 123 d. shall commence.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
January 29, 2014.

NOTE: The related memorandum of January 17 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the General Electric Company Gas Engines Plant in Waukesha, Wisconsin

January 30, 2014

The President. Thank you! Hello, hello, hello! Well, it's good to be in Wisconsin. It's good to be in Waukesha. Now, I've always appreciated the hospitality that Packer Country gives a Bears fan. [*Laughter*] I mean, I remember when I was up here campaigning the first time, and there were some "Cheeseheads for Obama"—[*laughter*]—and I felt pretty good about that. Neither of us feel that good about our seasons, but that's okay. There's always next year.

We have three of your outstanding elected officials with us here today. We've got Congresswoman Gwen Moore; we've got the mayor of Milwaukee, Tom Barrett; and we have Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele. And we've got your former Governor, Jim Doyle. And it's also good to see—I had a chance to see backstage somebody who was a huge part of my economic team before she became chancellor of the University of Wisconsin–Madison: Dr. Becky Blank is here. And we just want to give Becky a big round of applause. She said she missed Washington, but she doesn't really. [*Laughter*] She was just saying that to be nice.

I'm so proud of Reggie, and I'm grateful for the terrific introduction. I want to thank Jim for showing me around the plant.

I have come here to talk with you about something that I spent a lot of time on in my State of the Union Address on Tuesday: the idea that no matter who you are, if you are willing to work hard, if you're willing to take on responsibility, you can get ahead; the idea of opportunity here in America.

Now, we're at a moment where businesses like GE have created 8 million new jobs over the past 4 years. And that's good news. Our unemployment rate is the lowest that it's been in more than 5 years. Our deficits have been cut in half. Housing is rebounding. Manufacturing is adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. We sell more of what we make here in America to other countries than we ever have before.

Today we learned that in the second half of last year, our economy grew by 3.7 percent. Well, we still have more work to do, but that's pretty strong. And our businesses led the way. Over the past year, the private sector grew faster than at any time in over a decade.

And that's why I believe this can be a breakthrough year for America. After 5 years of hard work, digging ourselves out of the worst recession of our lifetimes, we are now better positioned in the 21st century than any other country on Earth. We've got all the ingredients we need to make sure that America thrives. And the question for folks in Washington is whether they're going to help or they're going to hinder that progress, whether they're going to waste time creating new crises that slow things down or they're going to spend time creating new jobs and opportunity.

Because the truth is—and you know this in your own lives, and you see it in your neighborhoods and among your friends and family—even though the economy has been growing for 4 years, even though corporate profits have been doing very well, stock prices have soared, most folks' wages haven't gone up in over a decade. The middle class has been taking it on the chin even before the financial crisis, too many Americans working harder than ever just to get by, let alone get ahead. And then, there are too many Americans who still are out of work here in Wisconsin and around the country. So we've got to reverse those trends if we're going to be serious about giving opportunity to everybody.

And that's why, on Tuesday, I laid out some new steps that we can take right now to speed up economic growth and strengthen the middle class and build ladders of opportunity into the middle class. Some of the ideas I presented I'm going to need Congress for. But America cannot stand still, and neither will I. So wherever I can take steps to expand opportunity, to help working families, that's what I'm going to do, with or without Congress. I want to work

with them, but I can't wait for them. We've got too much work to do out there, because the defining project of our generation—what we have to tackle right now, what has driven me throughout my Presidency, and what will drive me until I wave goodbye—is making sure that we're restoring opportunity to every single person in America.

Now, this opportunity agenda that I put forward has four parts. First part is creating more new jobs: jobs in American manufacturing, American exports, American energy, American innovation. And by the way, this plant represents all those things. You've seen new jobs being built in part because we've had this amazing energy boom in this country. And the engines that are built here, a lot of them are being utilized in that new energy production. We're exporting a whole bunch of these engines overseas.

The manufacturing that's taking place here isn't just good for this plant, it has spillover effects throughout the economy. And what's also true is, is that manufacturing jobs typically pay well. We want to encourage more of them. And there's also innovation going on at this plant. So the engines that were built 25 years ago aren't the same as the engines we're building today.

So the first thing is, let's create more new jobs. Number two, we've got to train Americans with the skills to fill those jobs. Americans like Reggie, we've got to get them ready to take those jobs. Number three, we've got to guarantee every child access to a world-class education, because that's where the foundation starts for them to be able to get a good job.

And then, number four, we've got to make sure hard work pays off. If you work hard, you should be able to support a family. You may not end up being wildly rich, but you should be able to pay your mortgage, your car note, look after your family, maybe take a vacation once in a while—[*laughter*]—no, especially when it's kind of cold. [*Laughter*] Yeah, yeah, yeah. At the State of the Union, I was going to start out by saying, the state of the Union is cold. [*Laughter*] But I decided that was not entirely appropriate. [*Laughter*]

So on Tuesday, I talked about what it will take to attract more good-paying jobs to America, everything from changing our Tax Code so we're rewarding companies that invest here in the United States instead of folks who are parking profits overseas, to boosting more natural gas production. But in this rapidly changing economy, we also have to make sure that folks can fill those jobs. And that's why I'm here today.

I know some folks in Wisconsin can remember a time, a few decades ago, when finding a job in manufacturing wasn't hard at all. If you basically wanted a job, you showed up at a factory, you got hired. If you worked hard, you could stay on the job. But our economy is changing. Not all of today's good jobs need a 4-year degree, but the ones that don't need a college degree do need some specialized training. We were looking at some of the equipment here. It's $5 million worth of equipment. GE is going to be a little nervous if they just kind of put you there on the first day and say, here, run this thing—[*laughter*]—because if you mess up, you mess up. [*Laughter*]

So that's a challenge for workers, and it's a challenge for companies who want to build things here and want to bring jobs back from overseas. As one of the top executives here put it, Brian White, "If we're going to have a manufacturing base in this country, we've got to find a way to have manufacturing employees."

Now, the good news is that folks across Wisconsin have set out to do just that. This plant is a great example of that. That's why we're here, in addition to just, you seem like very nice people. [*Laughter*] But we're here because you're doing some really good stuff that everybody else needs to pay attention to. Together with a local high school, you started a youth apprenticeship program. So students spend 4 hours a day in the classroom, 4 hours on the shop floor. After 2 years, they leave with both a high school diploma and a technical certificate.

Then, you set up an adult apprenticeship program so that folks can earn while they learn. You're working with partners from the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership to Mayor Barrett's manufacturing partnership, to

more than 50 other employers, big and small, across the region in order to spot job openings months in advance and then design training programs specifically for the openings. You even helped set up a "schools to skills" program with a local business alliance to bring kids to factories and help inspire them to pursue careers in manufacturing.

And I just want to make a quick comment on that. A lot of parents, unfortunately, maybe when they saw a lot of manufacturing being offshored, told their kids, "You don't want to go into the trades, you don't want to go into manufacturing, because you'll lose your job." Well, the problem is that what happened, a lot of young people no longer see the trades and skilled manufacturing as a viable career. But I promise you, folks can make a lot more, potentially, with skilled manufacturing or the trades than they might with an art history degree. Now, nothing wrong with an art history degree—[*laughter*]—I love art history. So I don't want to get a bunch of e-mails from everybody. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying, you can make a really good living and have a great career without getting a 4-year college education as long as you get the skills and the training that you need.

So back to what you guys are doing. All this work has paid off. It's one of the reasons why, over the past 4 years, you've grown your manufacturing workforce by nearly half. So what you're doing at this plant and across this region can be a model for the country, which is why I've asked Congress to fund more reliably proven programs that connect more ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs. That's what we'd like to see from Congress.

Of course, there are a lot of folks who do not have time to wait for Congress. They need to learn new skills right now to get a new job right now. So that's why here today at GE, I'm making it official: Vice President Biden, a man who was raised on the value of hard work and is tenacious, is going to lead an across-the-board review of America's training programs. We've got a lot of programs, but not all of them are doing what they should be doing to get people filled for jobs that exist right now. And we've got to move away from what my Labor Secretary, Tom Perez, calls "train and pray." You train workers first, and then you hope they get a job. We can't do that, partly because it costs money to train folks. And a lot of times young people, they take out loans, so they're getting into debt, thinking they've been training for a job, and then, suddenly, there's no job there.

What we need to do is look at where are the jobs and take a job-driven approach to training. And that's what you're doing here in Wisconsin. So we've got to start by figuring out which skills employers are looking for. Then we've got to engage the entire community. We've got to help workers earn the skills they need to do the job that exists. And then, we've got to make sure that we're continually following up and upgrading things, because companies are constantly shifting their needs.

So what we're going to do is, we're going to review all of Federal job training programs, soup to nuts. And then we're also going to be supporting local ones. I've asked Vice President Biden and top officials in the Federal Government to reach out to Governors, mayors, business leaders, labor leaders, Democratic and Republican Members of Congress. Let's find what programs are working best, and let's duplicate them and expand them.

And later this year, I'm going to ask Tom Perez, my Secretary of Labor, to apply those lessons as we conduct the next round of a national competition we're going to set up, challenging community colleges to partner with local employers and national industries to design job-driven training programs. And we're going to have at least one winner from every State. And we're going to invest nearly $500 million in the partnerships that show the most potential. So we're putting some real money behind this.

Now, we know that we've got to start training our younger workers better and that a worker's first job can set them on an upward trajectory for life. So we should do something as a country that you're doing right here, and that is, create more apprenticeship opportunities that put workers on a path to the middle class. Part of the problem for a lot of young

people is, they just don't know what's out there. If you've never worked on a plant floor, you don't know what's involved, you don't know what it is. If you don't have a dad or a mom or an uncle or somebody who gives you some sense of that, you may not know how interesting the work is and how much you can advance.

So while we redouble our efforts to train today's workforce, we've got to make sure that we're doing everything we can to expand apprenticeships. And I'm going to call on American companies all across the country, particularly manufacturers, to set up more apprenticeship programs.

And we've got to make sure that once folks are through training, once they get a job, that the hard work pays off for every single American. I talked about this in my State of the Union. Incomes, wages have not gone up as fast as corporate profits and the stock market have gone up. And that's a problem for the economy as a whole, because if all the gains are just at the top, ordinary folks aren't doing better, then they're not shopping. They're not buying new cars; they're not buying new appliances; they're not buying the new home. And that depresses the entire economy. When there's money in the pockets of ordinary folks, everybody does better, including businesses.

Now, today, women make up half our workforce. They're making 77 cents for every dollar a man earns.

Audience member. That's wrong!

The President. That's wrong. Who said that? That's wrong. It's wrong. [*Applause*] It's an embarrassment. So I mentioned on Tuesday, women deserve equal pay for equal work. Women deserve to have a baby without sacrificing her job and should be able to get a day off when the kid gets sick. Dads need that too.

We've got to give women the opportunity—every opportunity that she deserves. As I said on Tuesday, when women succeed, America succeeds. And by the way, when women succeed, men succeed. Because I don't know about all the guys here, but when Michelle is doing good and happy, I'm happy too. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. But also, just the economics of it, because we now live in a society where if you've got two breadwinners, that sure helps make ends meet. So if a woman is getting cheated, that's a family issue for the whole family, not just for her.

Now, women hold a majority of lower wage jobs. But they're not the only ones who are getting stifled by stagnant wages. As Americans, we all understand some folks are going to make more money than others. And we don't actually envy their success. When they're worked hard, they make a lot of money, that's great. Michelle and I were talking; Michelle's dad was a blue-collar worker, worked at a water filtration plant down in Chicago. Mom was a secretary. My mom was a single mom. They never made a lot of money. They weren't worrying about what the rich and famous were doing. They weren't going around saying, well, I don't have a fur coat and a Ferrari. They just wanted to make sure that if they were working hard, they could look after their family.

And that's how I think most Americans, that's how we all feel. Americans overwhelmingly agree, nobody who works full time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. They shouldn't have to do it.

So this is why I've been spending some time talking about the minimum wage. Right now the Federal minimum wage doesn't even go as far as it did back in 1950. We've seen States and cities raising their minimum wages on their own, and I support these efforts, including the one that's going on right here in Wisconsin. As a chief executive, I'm going to lead by example. I talked about this on Tuesday. I'm going to issue an Executive order requiring Federal contractors to pay the federally funded employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. Because if you're a cook or washing dishes for our troops on a base, you shouldn't have to live in poverty.

Of course, to reach millions more people, Congress is going to need to catch up with the rest of the country. There's a bill in Congress right now to raise the Federal minimum wage to $10.10—the 10–10 bill. It's easy to remember: 10–10. And they should say yes to it. Give America a raise.

Making work pay also means access to health care that's there when you get sick. The Affordable Care Act means nobody is going to get dropped from their insurance or denied coverage because of a preexisting condition like back pain or asthma. You can't be charged more if you're a woman. Those days are over. More Americans are signing up for private health insurance every day. So if you know somebody who isn't covered—the great thing about this shop is, because of strong union leadership and GE is a great company, most of the folks who work here, they've got good health insurance. But you've got friends, family members, maybe kids who are older than 26—because if they're younger than 26, they should be able to stay on your plan, thanks to the law that we passed, but if they don't have health insurance right now—call them up, sit them down, help them get covered at healthcare.gov by March 31.

So these things are all going to help advance opportunity, restore some economic security: more good jobs, skills that keep you employed, savings that are portable, health care that's yours and can't be canceled or dropped if you get sick, a decent wage to make sure, if you're working hard, it pays off. These are real, practical, achievable solutions to help shift the odds back in favor of more working families.

That's what all of you represent, just like the Americans who are on this stage. Several of these folks graduated from one of your training programs last year, including Reggie. And as you heard Reggie say, he feels like he "won the Super Bowl of life." But just like the real Super Bowl, success requires teamwork. So as they earned the skills that put them on the path to the middle class, Reggie and folks in the program had to look out for each other. They had to help each other out. Sometimes, if one of them slipped, they had to come together and make sure nobody missed a beat.

And that's the attitude it's going to take for all of us to build the world's best trained workforce. That's the attitude it's going to take to restore opportunity for everybody who's willing to work hard. And it won't be easy, and sometimes, some folks will slip, but if we come together and push forward, everybody as a team, I'm confident we're going to succeed. We've seen it here in Wisconsin. We can make sure it happens all across the country.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you. And now I'm going to sign this Executive order to make sure we've got everybody trained out there.

[*At this point, the President greeted event participants.*]

Audience member. Obama!

The President. Hey, I hear you out there.

[*The President continued to greet event participants.*]

Audience member. Obama!

The President. Hey, hey, nice to see you.

[*The President signed a memorandum on job-driven training for workers.*]

The President. Ready to go. There you go. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to former Deputy Secretary of Commerce Rebecca M. Blank; Reginald Troop, employee, Jim Flemming, plant manager and global supply chain manager, and Brian White, integration leader, General Electric Power and Water's Distributed Power. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at McGavock High School in Nashville, Tennessee
January 30, 2014

The President. Hello, Raiders! Thank you. Hello, everybody. Hey! Well, it is good to be in Nashville! And it's good to be here at Big Mac.

I want to thank Reverend Sinkfield for your words of prayer. I want to thank Ronald for the great introduction. We are very proud of him. He's going somewhere. And he looks very sharp in that bow tie. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the mayor of Nashville, Karl Dean, for having us here today. Mr. Mayor. You've got two outstanding Members of Congress who are here, Steve Cohen and Jim Cooper. And I want to acknowledge one of the finest public servants that we've ever had and a native of—proud native of Tennessee, Mr. Al Gore is here as well.

To the superintendent and your outstanding principal and all the teachers and, most importantly, the students, as well as all the parents who are doing an outstanding job, I just want to say thank you.

I wanted to come here today because I've heard great things about this high school and all of you. But I also recognize, the past couple days have been hard and have tested people's spirits. Some of you lost a good friend. So I wanted you to know that Michelle and I have been praying for all of you and the community. And I know that all of us are sending prayers to those families that have been so directly impacted. It's been heartbreaking.

I'd been planning to come to this school for a while because you've made great strides. You've made great strides, and the reason you've made great strides is because you've worked hard together. And by the way, those of you who have seats, feel free to sit down. [*Laughter*] Those of you who don't, don't. [*Laughter*]

You've been there for each other. In the weeks and months ahead, I hope you keep being there for each other, help each other through challenges and difficulties. This community cares about you. This country cares about you. And we want to celebrate what you've achieved, because the message I want to send here today is, we want every child to have every chance in life, every chance at happiness, every chance at success.

On Tuesday, I delivered my State of the Union Address. And—[*applause*]. Now, what I was going to say right at the top was, "The state of the Union is cold." [*Laughter*] But what I instead focused on is a very simple but profound idea, the idea of opportunity. It's at the heart of who we are as Americans. It means that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, if you work hard, if you live up to your responsibilities, you can make it in America.

And that's the chance that this country gave me. I'm not very different than a lot of the students who are here, except probably, I was more irresponsible. [*Laughter*] I was raised by a single mom, with the help of my grandmother and my grandfather. We didn't have a lot of money, and sometimes, my mom was struggling because she was raising two kids and also trying to go to school herself.

We lived overseas for a time, but my mother emphasized even then, even when I was 6, 7, 8 years old, that your ticket is an education. And because I was living overseas, she was worried that I'd fall behind. So she used to wake me up before sunrise to do my correspondence courses, to make sure I was keeping up with my American schooling, before I went to school over there.

And if you're 7 and 8 and you're waking up at 4:30, 5 in the morning, you don't feel real good. You're not happy. [*Laughter*] And so I'd grumble and complain, and she'd say, "Listen, this is no picnic for me either, buster." [*Laughter*] But she understood that if her son and later her daughter, my sister, got a good education, even if we didn't have a lot, then the world would open up to us.

And with that support structure that started at home, but then extended to teachers and communities and a country that was willing to give scholarships and folks who were willing to give me a helping hand and sometimes give me second chances when I made mistakes, through all of that, I was able to go to some of the best colleges in the country, even though we didn't have a lot of money.

Michelle, my wife, the daughter of a blue-collar worker and a secretary, was able to go to some of the best schools in the country. And we were able to achieve things that our parents and our grandparents could have never imagined, could have never dreamed of. And I want

every young person in America to have that same chance, every single one.

And that's why, in my speech on Tuesday night, I laid out an agenda where we need to grow our economy for everybody, we need to strengthen the middle class, we've got to make it easier for folks to work their way into the middle class. An opportunity agenda that has four parts: more new jobs; making sure folks have the skills to fill those jobs; making sure that we are rewarding hard work with a living wage and incomes; and the thing that I'm here to talk about right here, guaranteeing every young person access to a world-class education, every single one.

Now, sometimes, we only hear the bad news. So I just want to report on some good news. We have made progress when it comes to education in America. Right now our high school graduation rate is the highest that it's been in 30 years. The dropout rate has been falling, and for example, the Latino dropout rate has been cut in half over the last 10 years.

When I came into office, we took on a financial aid system running through the banks that was good for the banks, but wasn't good for students. We reformed it, providing billions of more dollars to millions of more students. And now we've got more young people graduating from college than ever before.

And then, to spark reform, 5 years ago, we started a competition that we call Race to the Top to promote innovation and reform in America's schools. Tennessee was one of the first States to win that competition. And because of that commitment—bringing together educators and parents and businesses and elected officials at State and Federal levels—because of all that, you are actually the fastest improving State in the Nation.

You've given teachers more support. You've founded new ways to identify and reward the best teachers. You've made huge strides in helping young people learn the skills they need for a new economy, skills like problem-solving and critical thinking, science, technology, engineering, math. In Nashville alone, you've boosted graduation rates by almost 20 percent in about a decade. That's something you should be very proud of.

So I want us to take the lessons we've learned and are learning in terms of what's working and make sure more schools are able to do some of the things you're doing. I want to build on what works. But to do that, we've got to reach more kids, and we've got to do it faster. Because my attitude is, there's no child that we should let slip simply because of politics or because adults can't get their act together. We've got to make sure that we're reaching every single one of them as fast as we can. And right now we're not doing that.

So here's where we should start. Research shows that high-quality early education is one of the best investments we can make in a child's life. We know that. And it's a—not only is it good for the child, it's a smart investment. Every dollar you put into early childhood education, the Government will—taxpayers will save $7 because you have fewer dropouts, fewer teen pregnancies, fewer——

Audience member. Incarcerations.

The President. ——incarcerations. Thank you. [*Laughter*] Folks will get better jobs, pay more taxes. So it's a win-win for everybody.

And last year I asked Congress, help States make high-quality prekindergarten available to every 4-year-old in America. Now, the good news is, 30 States have decided to raise some pre-K funding on their own. And school districts like this one have plans to open dedicated pre-K centers with space for hundreds of young kids. And we did get a little help from Congress earlier this month. But while we got a little help, we need more help. Because even with the efforts of your superintendent and folks who are working hard in this school district, there are still going to be some kids who could use the help, but aren't getting it.

So Congress, I'd like to see them act more boldly than they are. But while Congress decides if it's willing to give every child that opportunity, I'm not waiting. So we're going to bring business leaders from all across the country and philanthropists from all across the country who are willing to help work with school districts, mayors, Governors to make

sure more young people every single year are getting access to the high-quality pre-K that they need. That's going to be a project over the next 3 years.

We also need to give students access to the world's information. Technology is not the sole answer for a child's education. Having a good teacher is what is most important, and having great parents is even more important than that. But in this modern, 21st-century economy, technology helps. It can be a powerful tool to leverage good teaching.

So last year, I pledged to connect 99 percent of our students to high-speed broadband over 5 years. And with help of the Federal Communications Commission, the FCC, we're making a downpayment on that goal by connecting more than 15,000 schools, 20 million students over the next 2 years, so that there is wireless in every classroom.

And we are going to hit that goal of—there's not going to be a child in a school in America that does not have the kind of wireless connection that allows them to stream in the information they need that can power their education. That's going to be a priority. We've got—[*applause*]. And I want to acknowledge, by the way, we've got companies like Apple, Microsoft, Sprint, Verizon; they're going to help students and teachers use the latest tools to accelerate learning.

Now, we also need to encourage more schools to rethink not just what they teach, but how they teach it. And that's where what you're doing here is so important. If you're a student here, your experience is a little different from students at other high schools. Starting in 10th grade, you get to choose from one of four academies that allow you to focus on a specific subject area. Local businesses are doing their part by giving students opportunities to connect the lessons you learn in the classroom with jobs that are actually out there to be filled.

So students in the Academy of Business and Finance, they're operating their own credit union here at the school and doing some work in a real one over the summer. If you choose Digital Design and Communication, you get to spend time in a TV studio designed by a local business partner. If you choose the Aviation and Transportation Academy, you get to learn how to operate a 3–D printer and work on your very own airplane. Now, that's pretty cool. I did not get my own plane until I was 47 years old. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. And it's big.

The President. But—yes, it's a nice plane, but I've got to give it back. [*Laughter*] That's the only thing. It's a rental. [*Laughter*]

But the idea is simple, but powerful: Young people are going to do better when they're excited about learning, and they're going to be more excited if they see a connection between what they're doing in the classroom and how it is applied. If they see a connection between—all right, the math that I'm doing here, this connects to the business that's going on out there. The graphic design I'm doing here, I am learning now what that means in terms of marketing or working for a company that actually gets paid to do this, which means I might get paid to do it. And I'm seeing people who may open up for me entire new career options that I didn't even realize.

So that makes words on a page exciting and real and tangible. And then schools like this one teach you everything you need to succeed in college, but because of that hands-on experience, you're able to create pathways to make sure that folks also are able, if they choose not to go to a 4-year institution, potentially get a job sooner.

And it's working. Over the past 9 years, the graduation rate here has gone up 22 percent. [*Applause*] Twenty-two percent. Last year, attendance across the district, which includes 12 academy high schools, was higher than ever. Thousands of students are getting a head start on their future years before many of their peers do. And it's great for businesses because they're developing a pool of workers who already have the skills that they're looking for.

Now, every community is different, with different needs, different approaches. But if Nashville can bring schools and teachers and businesses and parents together for the sake of our young people, then other places can. So

that's why my administration is already running a competition to redesign high schools through employer partnerships that combine a quality education with real-world skills and hands-on learning.

I want to encourage more high schools to do what you are doing. That's why we're also in the process of shaking up our system of higher education so that when you graduate from high school ready to succeed in college, it's easier to afford college. And we're also working to help more students pay off their student loan debt once they graduate. A quality education shouldn't be something that those other kids get, it's something that all kids get.

Audience member. Including DREAMers.

The President. Absolutely.

Now, the other day, I heard the story of a recent graduate here named Sara Santiago. Where is Sara? There's Sara right here. I want to—I hope I'm not embarrassing Sara. I'm going to tell her story.

Sara's parents came to America from Guatemala, and she struggled her freshman year—I think she'll admit it. In her own words, she was "one of the bad kids." Now, she doesn't look that bad. [*Laughter*] I promise you, I was bad. [*Laughter*] You might not have been that bad, but probably, you weren't taking your studies that seriously. And then she took a broadcasting class with a teacher named Barclay Randall. Now—[*applause*]. There's Mr. Randall right back there. Go ahead and wave, Mr. Randall. [*Applause*] That's Mr. Randall. Now, Mr. Randall is over there with the press right now because some of his students are covering this event; they're doing some reporting. So—[*applause*].

But when Sara was in Mr. Randall's class, he helped her discover this passion for filmmaking. And pretty soon, Sara's grades started to improve. So she won the school's best editing award. Then she got an internship with Country Music Television, one of your business partners. And then she was accepted to the prestigious Savanna College of Art and Design. And she gives credit to Mr. Randall for this. She says: "Mr. Randall gave me a second chance. He saw things I never saw in myself. He's the person who helped me change."

Now, giving every student that chance, that's our goal. That's what America is all about. We work and study hard and chase our individual success, but we are also pulling for each other, and we've got each other's backs. And as a nation, we make the investment in every child as if they're our children. Because we're saying to ourselves, if every child is successful, then the world my child grows up in will be more successful. The America that my child grows up in will be more successful.

So there are some lessons that we've got to absorb as a nation. Where we can, we've got to start early. Get to kids when they're 3, 4 years old, because not every parent has got the same resources and we've got to help them get that good start for that child. We've got to make sure that we are supporting our teachers, because they are the most critical ingredient in a school. And we've got to show them how important they are, which means giving them the professional development they need, giving them the support that they need, and giving them the pay that they need.

We've got to make sure that our high schools engage our children. And not every child is going to go on the same path at the same speed, but we can restructure how our high schools operate to make sure every child is engaged. And the more we can link them to real hands-on experience, the more likely they are to be engaged.

And we've got to make college affordable for every young person in America. But we can do all that; we'll still be missing something if we don't capture the spirit that Mr. Randall showed with Sara. That investment in our children, nothing is more important. And it doesn't cost any money, the initial spirit. The spirit then can express itself by us putting more resources into schools that need it.

But that spirit that every child matters, that's something that we can all embrace. We help each other along in good times and bad. And if America pulls together now around our young people, if we do our part to make sure every single child can go as far as their passions and

hard work will take them, then we will keep the American Dream alive not just for your generation, but for generations to come.

That's my goal. I hope it is yours too.

Thank you, Nashville, for the great job. Thank you, Raiders. I appreciate you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:45 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to W. Antoni Sinkfield, pastor, Payne Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Nashville, TN; Ronald Elliott, student, and Robbin Wall, principal, McGavock High School; Jesse Register, director, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools; former Vice President Albert A. Gore, Jr.; and Kevin Barbee, a McGavock High School student who was killed in a shooting on January 29. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng and mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Statement on Representative Henry A. Waxman's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

January 30, 2014

Early in the 20th century, Henry Waxman's grandparents came to America, the land of opportunity, and found a place where they could build a better life for themselves and their families. Over the course of 40 years in Congress, their grandson has fought to give every American family that same chance. Thanks to Henry's leadership, Americans breathe cleaner air, drink cleaner water, eat safer food, purchase safer products, and, finally, have access to quality, affordable health care. Today, he continues to advocate tirelessly on behalf of Los Angeles and California as he leads efforts to address a changing climate and make sure every American has the economic security that comes with health insurance. Henry will leave behind a legacy as an extraordinary public servant and one of the most accomplished legislators of his or any era. Michelle and I wish him, his wife Janet, and his family all the best as they begin the next chapter of their lives.

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum on Enhancing Safeguards To Prevent the Undue Denial of Federal Employment Opportunities to the Unemployed

January 31, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat.

Well, first of all, let me just thank Erick for being here, for sharing his story, for his service to our country. I hope that listening to Erick here, everybody recognizes what a great success story this is, but also the notion that somebody with this kind of skill and talent was having difficulty finding a job indicates the challenge that we face. And I want to thank all of you—business leaders and philanthropists, elected officials, all levels and members of my Cabinet and the administration—not only for coming, but for committing to more success stories for people like Erick, making sure that everybody in this country who wants to work has a chance to get ahead and not just get a paycheck, but also the dignity and the structure that a job provides people.

On Tuesday, I delivered my State of the Union Address. And I said that while the economy is getting stronger and businesses like yours have created more than 8 million new jobs over the past 4 years, our unemployment rate is lower than it's been in over 5 years, we all know we've still got a lot more to do to build an economy where everybody who is willing to work hard and take responsibility can get ahead. We've got to do more to restore opportunity for every American.

And the opportunity agenda I laid out begins with doing everything we can to create new jobs here in America: jobs in construction and manufacturing, jobs in American innovation and American energy. There are steps we can take to streamline our Tax Code to incentivize companies to invest here. There are things that we can do to make sure that we are continuing to lead the world in innovation and basic research. There—we've got a whole lot of infrastructure we can build that could put people to work right away. We've got a couple trillion dollars' worth of deferred maintenance in America, and the ramifications of us taking that on would be significant. So we've got to grow faster and put more shoulders behind the wheel of expanding economic growth.

Step two is making sure that every American has the skills to fill those jobs. Step three, we've got to guarantee every child access to a world-class education, from early childhood to college, to a career. And step four, we've got to make sure that hard work pays off, with wages you can live on, savings you can retire on, health insurance that's there for you when you need it.

Now, today we're here to focus on that second point: connecting more ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs so that folks who are out of work can apply the skills that they've already got. And getting people back on the job faster is one of our top priorities. But I have to confess, last month, Congress made that harder by letting unemployment insurance expire for more than a million people. And each week that Congress fails to restore that insurance, roughly 72,000 Americans will join the ranks of the long-term unemployed who have also lost their economic lifeline.

And for our fellow Americans who have been laid off through no fault of their own, unemployment insurance is often the only source of income they've got to support their families while they look for a new job. So when Erick was out of work, it's a lot harder to look for work if you can't put gas in the gas tank, if you're worried about whether there's food on the table for your kid. If Mom isn't making the rent and paying her phone bill, it's a lot harder for her to follow up with a potential employer. Unemployment insurance provides that extra bit of security so that losing your livelihood doesn't mean you lose everything that you've worked so hard to build. And that's true whether you've been out of work for 1 month or 6 months.

But folks who have been unemployed the longest often have the toughest time getting back to work. It's a cruel catch-22: The longer you're unemployed, the more unemployable you may seem. Now, this is an illusion, but it's one that unfortunately we know statistically is happening out there. According to one study, if you've been out of work 8 months, you're likely to get called back for an interview only about half as often as if you've been out of work 1 month, even with the identical résumé. So we are here tonight to say that's not right. Because we know there are folks like Erick, all across this country, who have enormous skills, enormous talents, enormous capacity. But they need a chance.

I invited Misty DeMars to my speech on Tuesday night. A mother of two young boys, she'd been steadily employed since she was a teenager, put herself through college, had never collected unemployment benefits, never depended on the Federal Government, extraordinarily impressive young woman. When she lost her job to budget cuts, she couldn't find another, she turned to unemployment insurance to make sure she and her husband could keep the new home they had just spent their life savings to buy. And as I said on Tuesday, she wrote to me and saying: "I'm confident I'll find a job. I will pay my taxes. I will raise our kids in the home that we purchased in a community that we love. Please give us this chance." And I thought that spoke for so many Americans out there: Just give us this chance.

They're our neighbors, they're our friends: young and old; Black, White; men, women; Ph.D.'s and GEDs. The interesting thing, by the way, is statistically, the long-term unemployed are oftentimes slightly better educated, in some cases better qualified than folks who just lost their job. Just because you've been out

of work for a while does not mean that you are not a hard worker. It just means you had bad luck or you were in the wrong industry or you lived in a region of the country that's catching up a little slower than others in the recovery.

And I've heard from too many of these folks who show up early; they will outwork anybody. They fill out 100 applications, 200 applications. They're sending out résumés, still finding time to volunteer in their community or helping out at church. Sometimes, they have more experience, education, and skill than newly unemployed Americans. They just need that chance.

Somebody will look past that stretch of unemployment, put it in the context of the fact that we went through the worst financial and economic crisis in our lifetimes, which created a group of folks who were unemployed longer than normal. They just need employers to realize it doesn't reflect at all on their abilities or their value. It just means they've been dealing with the aftermath of this really tough job market that—and all they need is a fair shot. And with that shot, an out-of-work young person can get the critical experience he needs to improve his employment prospects for the rest of his life. With that shot, someone with decades of experience could get back in the game and show a younger worker the ropes. We can give them that shot. And that's what today is all about.

And we really don't have an alternative, because giving up on the unemployed will create a drag on our economy that we cannot tolerate. Giving up on any American is something America cannot do. And Erick, I think, made an important point during his early remarks. Oftentimes folks, no matter how skilled you are, how confident you are, you get discouraged. And that affects people's physical health. It affects their mental health. And over time, you can have a negative feedback, where it becomes harder and harder for folks to get back in the game because they're just getting so many discouraging messages. And that can have long-term impact, particularly if it's early on in a young person's career.

So while Congress decides whether or not it's going to extend unemployment insurance for these Americans, we're going to go ahead and act. We know what works, and we're going to go ahead and see what we can do without additional legislation to make some serious dents in the long-term unemployment problem.

We know what works for employers and employees alike. I spoke on Tuesday about Andra Rush, the head of Detroit Manufacturing Systems. She was with us at the State of the Union, sitting with the First Lady. When she was staffing up her new factory, she worked with the local American Jobs Centers—federally funded—to hire people who were out of the job, but ready to work. On average, they'd been unemployed for 18 months. Today, she says, they are some of her best employees.

Greg Merrity is here today. Greg has been working in sales for 30 years. When he lost his job in December 2011, for the first time in his life, he found himself struggling to capitalize on decades of work experience. After months of sending out résumés, pounding the pavement, Greg's unemployment insurance ran out. And he began, like Erick described, to start feeling hopeless and start feeling useless. Then last year, he got hooked up with an organization called Skills for Chicagoland's Future, which actually got its start thanks in part to the great work of Penny Pritzker, our Secretary of Commerce, as well as my former Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel.

And so this intermediary trains folks like Greg with the skills they need to get placed right away in one of the local companies. And just 2 weeks after enrolling, Greg was back on the job, helping people get signed up for the health insurance they need. And Greg said, "SCF made me feel relevant again, like I have something to offer."

So today more than 80 of the Nation's largest businesses, over 200 small and medium-sized businesses are announcing their commitment to a set of best practices, like Greg and Misty and Erick can access and feel as if they can have a partner in getting back on the job and making the contributions that we know they can make. And so I want to thank all the companies who have made this commitment.

With the support of Andrew Liveris and Ursula Burns, chairing the Business Council, and Randall Stephenson at the Business Roundtable, as well as the Society for Human Resource Management, we've engaged employers of all sizes, all around the country—including many who are here today—to commit to a set of inclusive hiring policies, from making sure recruiting and screening practices don't disadvantage folks who have been out of work to establishing an open-door policy that actively encourages all qualified applicants.

And of course, it's only right that the Federal Government lead by example. So today I am directing every Federal agency to make sure we are evaluating candidates on the level, without regard to their employment history. Because every job applicant deserves a fair shot.

And I just had a chance to meet with some of the CEOs who are making these commitments. Some of them are already participating with what's going on in Chicago. And they had some great ideas about what they know works.

For example, one of the things that we're going to have to examine is the impact of credit histories on the long-term unemployed. If you've been out of work for 18 months, you may have missed some bills. That can't be a barrier then for you getting to work so you can pay your bills. But unfortunately, we're setting up some, in some cases, perverse incentives and barriers. But in some cases what I heard from the CEOs is, it was just a matter of let's pay attention to this. Let's see if we're doing everything we can to look at every candidate on the merits.

And I was really grateful to all of them for stepping up in this way. And I'm confident that as a consequence of this initiative we're going to see some progress all across the country.

Going back to Greg, his life was turned around because of a partnership that really cares, not just because he got a fair shot, but because he had advocates who helped him earn the skills he needed to land a job that made sense for him. And so that's why we're excited to have programs like Chicagoland's Future and Platform 2 Employment and many others that are represented in this room. As important as it is for the businesses to make these commitments, it's great to have these intermediaries and nonprofits who are also able to show success, even with folks who have been out of work for a long, long time.

And my administration is going to partner with the business community and the nonprofit sector. I've asked Joe Biden to lead an across-the-board reform of all our training programs, working with Secretary of Labor Tom Perez, Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker, to make sure that our job training programs have a single mission: train Americans with the skills employers need and then match them to the good jobs that need to be filled right now. That's what we have to prioritize.

And today I'm announcing that the Department of Labor is going to put forward $150 million in a Ready To Work Partnership competition to support more partnerships that we know work—innovative collaborations between local governments, major employers, nonprofits—all designed to help workers get the skills they need and build bridges to the jobs that require them.

So even though our economy is getting stronger, it's not going to be enough until those gains translate into better opportunities for ordinary folks like Erick who are—have the skills, have the desire, just need a chance. We're going to keep on knocking down barriers to reemployment so more of the nearly 4 million long-term unemployed Americans can regain the stability and security that a good job brings their families—and by the way, so that they have more money to spend on local businesses, which will lift the entire economy up and create a virtuous cycle instead of a negative one.

We're going to keep encouraging employers to welcome all applicants. You never know who is going to have the great next idea to grow your business. We're going to keep building new ladders of opportunity to—for every American to climb into the middle class. It's good for our economy, but it's also good for our people.

We are stronger, as I said on Tuesday, when America fields a full team. So I just want to thank all the businesses here for your commit-

ments, all the nonprofits here for the work that you're already doing on the ground. We are going to scale this up. We are going to make this happen. Most of all, I want to thank Erick and some of the other folks who have experienced success, because—I told Erick before we came out here—when folks see him doing well, that gives them hope, and it reminds us that we can't afford to let such incredible talent be wasting away. We've got to get those folks back in the game, and that's what I'm committed to doing, and I know Joe is as well.

So thank you very much. I'm now going to sign our new Federal commitment. I appreciate you. And after this, I think you guys still have some more work to do. All right?

[*At this point, the President signed the memorandum.*]

There you go. All right. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:39 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Erick Varela, apprentice electrician, Pacific Gas & Electric Co.; Oak Park, IL, resident Misty DeMars and her husband Leighton Taylor; Gregory Merrity, insurance adviser, GoHealth; Mayor Rahm I. Emanuel of Chicago, IL; Andrew N. Liveris, president, chairman, and chief executive officer, Dow Chemical Co.; Ursula M. Burns, chairman and chief executive officer, Xerox Corp.; and Randall L. Stephenson, chairman and chief executive officer, AT&T Inc. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
February 1, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, I delivered my State of the Union Address. Today here's the 3-minute version.

After 4 years of economic growth with 8 million new private sector jobs, our unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in more than 5 years. And with the economy speeding up, companies say they intend to hire more people this year.

But while those at the top are doing better than ever, average wages have barely budged. Inequality has deepened. Too many Americans are working harder and harder just to get by. And too many still aren't working at all.

Our job is to reverse those trends. It's time to restore opportunity for all people: the idea that no matter who you are, if you work hard and live up to your responsibilities, you can make it if you try.

The opportunity agenda I laid out on Tuesday has four parts. This week, I took them on the road. Job one is more new jobs: jobs in construction and manufacturing, jobs in innovation and energy. In Wisconsin, I talked with plant workers at GE about part two: training more Americans with the skills to fill those new jobs. In Tennessee, I talked with students about part three: guaranteeing every child access to a world-class education, from early childhood, through college, and right into a career. And with steelworkers in Pittsburgh and retail workers in Maryland, I laid out part four: making sure hard work pays off for men and women, with wages you can live on, savings you can retire on, and health insurance that's there for you when you need it.

These ideas will strengthen the middle class and help more people work their way into the middle class. Some of them will require Congress. But wherever I can take steps to expand opportunity for more families on my own, I will. I'm going to ask business leaders, education leaders, and philanthropic leaders to partner with us to advance these goals.

And every single day, I'm going to fight for these priorities: to shift the odds back in favor of more working and middle class and to keep America a place where you can always make it if you try.

Thanks. Have a great weekend, and enjoy the Super Bowl.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:05 p.m. on January 31 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on February 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 31, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on February 1.

Statement on the Death of Joan Adams Mondale
February 3, 2014

Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to former Vice President Walter Mondale and his family on the passing of Joan Adams Mondale. America first came to know Joan through her husband; she was his devoted partner in public service, from Minnesota to Washington. A lifelong patron of the arts, Joan filled the Vice Presidential mansion with works by dozens of artists, including many unknowns, and later did the same at the U.S. Embassy in Japan during her husband's tenure as Ambassador. Through her contributions to the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities and the Kennedy Center, she passionately advocated for the role of art in the life of our Nation and the promotion of understanding worldwide. Our thoughts and prayers are with Vice President Mondale and his family today as we remember with gratitude "Joan of Art" and her service to our Nation.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

Remarks at Buck Lodge Middle School in Adelphi, Maryland
February 4, 2014

Hello, everybody. Thank you so much. Well, can everybody please give Nelson a big round of applause for the outstanding job that he did? So Nelson just told me backstage he plans to be on—plans on being a Navy SEAL. So I was really nice to him now so he doesn't mess with me later. [*Laughter*] We are very proud of him, proud of all the students who are here today.

I want to thank Principal Richardson for the great job that he's doing. And I want to thank all the wonderful teachers who are here at Buck Lodge Middle School. Go Vikings!

I brought along some people who very much care about the future of these young people. We've got America's Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, in the house. We've got the FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler and two of his fellow Commissioners who are here, doing great work. Congressman Steny Hoyer is in the house. County Executive Rushern Baker is here. And we've got some business leaders who've made some very big commitments today, because they know that your education is the very best investment that all of us can make in America.

Now, last week, in my State of the Union Address, I spent some time talking about opportunity for everybody, which is at the heart of this country, the idea that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like—if you have a chair feel free to sit down. [*Laughter*] That wasn't actually my line, but I thought—[*laughter*]. But at the core of America, the essence of it, what makes us exceptional, is this idea: No matter what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is, if you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to live up to your responsibilities, you can make it here in America.

But each generation has to work hard to make sure that dream of opportunity stays alive for the next generation. And the opportunity agenda that I laid out last week will help us do that. It's focused on four areas: number one, more new jobs; number two, training folks with the skills to fill those jobs; number three, making sure our economy rewards hard work with

decent wages and economic security; and number four, the piece I'm here to talk about today, guaranteeing every child access to a world-class education. Every child. Not just some, but everybody.

Now, I'm only standing here today because my education gave me a chance. I'm not so different than a lot of these young people. I was raised by a single mom, with the help of my grandma and my grandpa. We didn't have a lot of money, and for a while, my mother was working and going to school at the same time as she was raising a couple of kids. And there were times where times were tight. But with a family who loved me and with some hard work on my part—although it wasn't always consistent, as my mother and my grandparents would point out—and then ultimately, with the help of scholarships and student loans, I was able to go to college. I was able to go to law school. And an entire worlds of opportunity opened up to me that might not otherwise have been available.

So the country invested in me. My parents invested in me, my grandparents invested in me, but my country invested in me. And I want America to now invest in you, because in the faces of these students, these are future doctors and lawyers and engineers, scientists, business leaders. We don't know what kinds of products, services, good work that any of these students may do. But I'm betting on them, and all of us have to bet on them.

So, 5 years ago, we set out to change the odds on all of our kids. Our Race to the Top challenge has helped raise expectations and performance in States all across the country. Our high school graduation rate is the highest that it's been in more than 30 years. That's an achievement. The dropout rate among Latino students has been cut in half since 2000, really big deal. We reformed our student loan programs so that more young people are able to afford to go to college, and now we've got more young people earning a college degree than ever before.

Teachers and principals across the country are working hard to prepare students like you with the skills you need for a new economy, not just the basics of reading and writing and arithmetic, but skills like science and technology, engineering, critical thinking, creativity, asking, what do you think about that idea and how would you do things differently?

Now, we still have more work to do to reach more kids and reach them faster. And some of the ideas that I've presented will require Congress to act. But while Congress decides what it's going to do, I said at the State of the Union—and I want to repeat here today—I will act on my own. Wherever I have the opportunity to expand opportunity for more young people, wherever I have a chance to make a difference in their lives, I'm going to act. [*Applause*] I'm going to act.

So, in this year of action, we're going to work with States and communities to help them make high-quality pre-K available to more young children. We know it's a good investment. We want to keep working to partner high schools with colleges and employers to offer real-world education experiences that can lead directly to jobs and careers. And we want to do more to make sure no middle class kid is priced out of a college education and obviously no poor kid is priced out of a college education. That's got to be a priority for us.

But today we're here to announce some big strides that we're making to put the world and outer space at every child's fingertips, whether they live in a big city or a quiet suburb or in rural America.

Last year, I launched something called ConnectED, a new initiative to close the technology gap in our schools and connect 99 percent of America's students to high-speed broadband Internet within 5 years. Now, this is something we can do without waiting for Congress. We do need some help though. So we picked up the phone, and we started asking some outstanding business leaders to help bring our schools and libraries into the 21st century. Today, thanks to the leadership of some of these companies, we've got some big announcements to make.

But first, I want you to know why it matters that we make sure technology is available to every child. Technology is not the entire answer, by the way, when it comes to educational

excellence. We've got to make sure we've got outstanding teachers. We've got to make sure that parents are doing what they need to do. We need young people to make the effort and to have high expectations for themselves. But technology can help; it's a tool, it's just one more tool.

So today, the average American school has about the same Internet bandwidth as the average American home, but it serves 200 times as many people. All right? Think about it. So you've got the same bandwidth, but it's a school, it's not your house. Only around 30 percent of our students have true high-speed Internet in the classroom. In countries like South Korea, that's a hundred percent. Now, we shouldn't give that kind of competitive advantage over to other countries. We want to make sure our young people have the same advantages that some child in South Korea has right now. In a country where we expect free Wi-Fi with our coffee, we should definitely demand it in our schools.

Now, here at Buck Lodge, you are showing how we can use technology to teach our young people in innovative ways. And by the way, the principal told me that part of how this got started was some of the stimulus dollars that we put in place almost 5 years ago now. But every student here has access to their own iPad. And you don't just write papers or take tests; they're animating movies, they're designing blogs, they're collaborating on multimedia projects. In the word of an eighth grader, Annie Gomez, she says, "You can learn even more, you can take in more, and then you know more about the world."

And new technologies are helping teachers. So in Mr. Jeter's science class, students take quizzes on their tablets; he then can check the answers in real time, and he can figure out who needs extra help. In Ms. Galinat's language arts class, students learn vocabulary not just with flashcards, but with online video. In Ms. Stover's math class—I was just over with Ms. Stover—students bring their tablets home to watch lectures about concepts like ratios and rational numbers and then use the next day's classroom time applying those concepts to the real world. So technology allows teachers here to spend more time being creative, less time teaching to the test, giving continual feedback, being able to pinpoint where a young person is having trouble because they're able to see their work right away in a pretty efficient way.

And I will say, when I was just in a classroom, there was a lesson plan that was organized around the *Curiosity* rover on Mars. And these—the young people there were doing some amazing stuff, making their own iBooks with video and multimedia. And I was—as I was walking out, I was talking to Steny Hoyer about how I remember using glue sticks—[*laughter*]—and scissors to cut stuff out, and it didn't look very good. [*Laughter*] These guys were making books you could publish. [*Laughter*]

But it makes learning exciting; it makes it interesting. If you're studying science and you are actually seeing the engineers who built rover talk about what it is—or the *Curiosity* rover—talking about what they're doing and how they did it and being able to see the rover on the Martian landscape, it makes vivid and real math and science in a way that is more interesting to students, which means that they're more likely to be engaged and can potentially do better.

And this is how it should be for every student and every teacher at every school and library in the country. That's how it should be for everybody, not just some.

Today, almost 8 months after we launched ConnectED, we can announce some very big commitments that are going to go a long way towards realizing that vision where every child has the access to the technology that they can use to help them learn. So, under Tom Wheeler's leadership, the FCC is announcing a downpayment of $2 billion to connect more than 15,000 schools and 20 million students to high-speed broadband over the next 2 years—[*applause*]—15,000 schools, 20 million students. It won't require a single piece of legislation from Congress. It won't add a single dime to the deficit.

And even better, some of America's biggest tech companies have decided to join this effort, with commitments worth than—worth

more than three-quarters of a billion dollars. So let me just give you some examples.

Apple will donate a hundred million dollars' worth of iPads, MacBooks, and other products to schools across the country. That's an enormous commitment. Sprint will provide free wireless service for up to 50,000 low-income high school students over the next 4 years so their 21st-century education isn't confined to the classroom. AT&T will donate over $100 million worth of wireless service to middle school students so that they can continue to do homework when they get home.

Autodesk will make its 3–D design software available for free to every high school in the country. Microsoft will offer products like Windows to students and teachers at a deep discount and provide 12 million free copies of Office to our schools. O'Reilly Media and Safari Books Online will donate more than a hundred million dollars' worth of eBooks that will help students learn technology skills like coding and web design. And finally, because no technology will ever be as important as a great teacher, Verizon will expand a program to help train educators to use all these new tools in all 50 States.

So I want to thank all the business leaders who are here today for stepping up. Why don't you stand up? Let's give them a big round of applause. We're very proud of them. Thank you. [*Applause*]

Now, this is an extraordinary commitment by these business leaders, but they're business leaders, so they're not just doing it out of the goodness of their heart. They want the country to do well, but they also understand that they want educated customers. They want customers who are able to get good jobs, who are going to be using these tools in the future. They want that next young architect coming out of here to be familiar with using that iPad so that they're designing buildings and using their products.

They know that the entire economy will be lifted if more of our young people are doing better. So they're doing good, but it will also help them succeed from a bottom-line perspective by this kind of participation. They are united in their support of young people like you, even though sometimes they compete against each other, because all of us have a stake in your education and in your future.

And that's why we have to build on this progress together. Later this year, I'm going to ask Congress to do its part and give teachers using cutting-edge technologies the training they deserve, because it's important. As I said before, technology is not a silver bullet. It's only as good as the teachers who are there using it as one more tool to help inspire and teach and work through problems.

And although I've noticed that these days when I visit schools, most teachers are much younger than I am—[*laughter*]—I'm getting on in years, obviously, which means that I'm not always as familiar with iPads and technology as I need to be—we want every teacher in every school to understand, from soup to nuts how, you can potentially use this technology. And that oftentimes requires a training component that makes sure that the technology is not just sitting there, but is actually used and incorporated in the best way possible.

So I'm going to ask every business leader across America to join us in this effort. Ask yourself what you can do to help us connect our students to the 21st century. Ask yourselves what you can do to support our teachers and our parents and give every young people every shot at success.

And we can make this happen. And just imagine what it will mean for our country when we do. Imagine what it could mean for a girl growing up on a farm to be able to take AP Biology or AP Physics, even if her school is too small to offer it, because she's got the access to technology that allows her to take those classes online. Imagine what it means for a boy with an illness that confines him sometimes to home where he can join his classmates for every lesson with FaceTime or Skype. Imagine what it means for educators to spend less time grading tests and papers, more time helping young people learn. Imagine more businesses starting here and hiring here because they know for a fact that the young people here are going to be

equipped with the skills that are better than anybody else on Earth.

That's the future we're building. That's what these companies are investing in. And if America pulls together now—if we do our part to make sure every young person can go as far as their passion and their hard work will take them, whether it's to Mars or to the bottom of the ocean or to anywhere on this planet where you've got an Internet connection—if we commit ourselves to restoring opportunity for everybody, then we can keep the American Dream alive for generations to come.

That's our main project. That's our main obligation. That's why I ran for President. That's what I'm going to be working on for the next 3 years.

Thank you for all the work that you're doing here at this outstanding school. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Nelson Romero and Annie Stefanny Gomez-Marroquin, students, Buck Lodge Middle School; Jessica Rosenworcel and Ajit Pai, Commissioners, Federal Communications Commission; and Rushern L. Baker III, county executive, Prince George's County, MD. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Statement on Representative Robert E. Andrews's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
February 4, 2014

In his 23 years in the United States Congress, Rob Andrews has served the people of southern New Jersey with tenacity and skill. He helped put into place key workplace protections for hard-working Americans, pushed to improve education for American students, and fought for clean energy programs to foster America's energy independence. More recently, Rob was an original author of the Affordable Care Act and has been a vital partner in its passage and implementation. The grandson of shipyard workers and the first in his family to attend college, Rob has worked hard to preserve the American Dream for future generations. Michelle and I thank Congressman Andrews for his service and partnership, and we wish him, his wife Camille, and their two daughters the very best.

NOTE: The statement referred to Josie and Jacqueline Andrews, daughters of Rep. Andrews.

Statement on the Accelerating Medicines Partnership
February 4, 2014

Today my administration is taking action to accelerate the development of lifesaving drugs and to help identify new treatments and cures for diseases like Alzheimer's and diabetes. This new public-private partnership, the Accelerating Medicines Partnership, combines the considerable resources of America's Government with the innovation of our private sector companies in an effort to find new answers to today's domestic and global public health challenges.

Statement on Senate Passage of the Agricultural Act of 2014
February 4, 2014

Today, in a strong bipartisan vote, the U.S. Senate came together to pass a comprehensive farm bill, legislation that will build on the historic economic gains in rural America over the past 5 years, create new jobs and opportunities, and protect the most vulnerable Americans.

This bill provides certainty to America's farmers and ranchers and contains a variety of commonsense reforms that my administration has consistently called for, including reforming and eliminating direct farm subsidies and providing assistance for farmers when they need it most. It will continue reducing our deficits without gutting the vital assistance programs millions of hard-working Americans count on to help put food on the table for their families. And it will support conservation of valuable lands, spur the development of renewable energy, and incentivize healthier nutrition for all Americans. As with any compromise, the farm bill isn't perfect, but on the whole, it will make a positive difference not only for the rural economies that grow America's food, but for our Nation.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 2642.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Situation in or in Relation to Côte d'Ivoire
February 4, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency, unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13396 of February 7, 2006, with respect to the situation in or in relation to Côte d'Ivoire is to continue in effect beyond February 7, 2014.

The situation in or in relation to Côte d'Ivoire, which has been addressed by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1572 of November 15, 2004, and subsequent resolutions, has resulted in the massacre of large numbers of civilians, widespread human rights abuses, significant political violence and unrest, and fatal attacks against international peacekeeping forces.

Since the inauguration of President Alassane Ouattara in May 2011, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has made progress in advancing democratic freedoms and economic development. While the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and its people continue to make progress towards peace and prosperity, the situation in or in relation to Côte d'Ivoire continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
February 4, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on CVS Caremark Corporation's Decision To Stop Selling Tobacco Products
February 5, 2014

I applaud this morning's news that CVS Caremark has decided to stop selling cigarettes and other tobacco products in its stores and begin a national campaign to help millions of Americans quit smoking instead. As one of the largest retailers and pharmacies in America,

CVS Caremark sets a powerful example, and today's decision will help advance my administration's efforts to reduce tobacco-related deaths, cancer, and heart disease, as well as bring down health care costs, ultimately saving lives and protecting untold numbers of families from pain and heartbreak for years to come. I congratulate—and thank—the CEO of CVS Caremark, Larry Merlo, the board of directors, and all who helped make a choice that will have a profoundly positive impact on the health of our country.

Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast
February 6, 2014

The President. Thank you. Please, everyone have a seat and give an all praise and honor to God, who brought us here this morning.

Thank you so much for our two outstanding cochairs, Louie and Jan. And I have to say, I would have enjoyed a behind-the-scenes look at the two of these folks getting this breakfast organized this morning. [*Laughter*] But there does seem to be that sibling thing a little bit, Louie. [*Laughter*] They love each other, but they've got to go at each other a little bit. I, by the way, have always found Louie to be unbelievably gracious every time I've seen him. Now, I don't watch TV, I've got to admit, so—[*laughter*]. But he is a good man and a great storyteller, and Janice was just reminding me, the first time we saw each other was at one of my first events when I first ran for office.

It's wonderful to see all of the dignitaries and friends who are here today. To the Presidents and Prime Ministers, the leaders of business and the nonprofit community; to my incredible friend and Vice President, Joe Biden; to my Cabinet members who are here and members of the administration who do such great work every single day; to my fellow Hawaiian, it is wonderful to see you. I should tell you that I—my surfing is not that good. [*Laughter*] I just want to be clear.

Senator Mazie K. Hirono. But your bodysurfing—[*inaudible*].

The President. But my bodysurfing is pretty good. See, that—[*laughter*].

Sen. Hirono. That's just as fun. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, it is. [*Laughter*] And to Raj Shah, who is just such an incredible young leader and is out there every single day, I could not be more proud of his outstanding leadership at USAID. And it's a good reminder of the dedicated public servants that I have the chance to interact with every single day. And they do great work, don't always get a lot of credit, sometimes get subject to the sort of criticism that you do when you're in public life, but Raj is single minded in terms of trying to help as many people as possible all around the world and is an extraordinary representative for our country. So I'm very, very proud of him, although he does always make me feel like an underachiever whenever I listen to him. [*Laughter*] I'm thinking, I should have been working harder and not slouching. [*Laughter*]

Dale Jones and everyone else who worked on this breakfast this morning, thank you, and obviously, I'm thrilled to be joined by my extraordinary wife, and she does a great job every single day keeping me in line.

Just two other thank yous. To our men and women in uniform all around the world, we pray for them, many of them doing such great work to keep us safe. And then there is one colleague of mine who is missing today. A great friend of mine who I came into the Senate with, Senator Tom Coburn. Tom is going through some tough times right now, but I love him dearly even though we're from different parties. And he's a little closer to Louie's political perspective than mine, but he is a good man, and I'm keeping him and his family in my prayers all the time. So just a shout-out to my good friend Tom Coburn.

So each time we gather, it's a chance to set aside the rush of our daily lives; to pause with humility before an Almighty God; to seek His grace; and mindful of our own imperfections, to remember the admonition of the Book of Romans, which is especially fitting for those of

us in Washington: "Do not claim to be wiser than you are."

So here we put aside labels of party and ideology and recall what we are first: all children of a loving God, brothers and sisters called to make His work our own. But in this work, as Lincoln said, our concern should not be whether God is on our side, but whether we are on God's side.

And here we give thanks for His guidance in our own individual faith journeys. In my life, He directed my path to Chicago and my work with churches who were intent on breaking the cycle of poverty in hard-hit communities there. And I'm grateful not only because I was broke and the church fed me, but because it led to everything else. It led me to embrace Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. It led me to Michelle—the love of my life—and it blessed us with two extraordinary daughters. It led me to public service. And the longer I serve, especially in moments of trial or doubt, the more thankful I am of God's guiding hand.

Now, here, as Americans, we affirm the freedoms endowed by our Creator, among them freedom of religion. And yes, this freedom safeguards religion, allowing us to flourish as one of the most religious countries on Earth, but it works the other way too, because religion strengthens America. Brave men and women of faith have challenged our conscience and brought us closer to our founding ideals, from the abolition of slavery to civil rights, workers' rights.

So many of you carry on this good work today: for the child who deserves a school worthy of his dreams; for the parents working overtime to pull themselves out of poverty; for the immigrants who want to step out of the shadows and become a full member of our American family; and for the young girl who prays for rescue from the modern slavery of human trafficking, an outrage that we must all join together to end.

Through our Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, led by Melissa Rogers, we're proud to work with you on this and many other issues. And I invite you to join us in a new initiative that I announced in my State of the Union Address, an effort to help more young men of color overcome the odds, because so many boys in this country need that mentor to help them become a man and a good father.

I've felt the love that faith can instill in our lives during my visits to the Holy Land and Jerusalem, sacred to Jews and Christians and Muslims. I've felt it in houses of worship, whether paying my respects at the tomb of Archbishop Romero in San Salvador or visiting a synagogue on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, or a Buddhist temple in Bangkok. And I've felt the compassion of so many faith leaders around the world, and I am especially looking forward to returning to the Vatican next month to meet His Holiness Pope Francis, whose message about caring for the "least of these" is one that I hope all of us heed. Like Matthew, he has answered the call of Jesus, who said, "Follow me," and he inspires us with his words and deeds, his humility, his mercy, and his missionary impulse to serve the cause of social justice.

Yet even as our faith sustains us, it's also clear that around the world freedom of religion is under threat. And that is what I want to reflect on this morning. We see governments engaging in discrimination and violence against the faithful. We sometimes see religion twisted in an attempt to justify hatred and persecution against other people just because of who they are or how they pray or who they love. Old tensions are stoked, fueling conflicts along religious lines, as we've seen in the Central African Republic recently, even though to harm anyone in the name of faith is to diminish our own relationship with God. Extremists succumb to an ignorant nihilism that shows they don't understand the faiths they came—claim to profess. For the killing of the innocent is never fulfilling God's will; in fact, it's the ultimate betrayal of God's will.

Today we profess the principles we know to be true. We believe that each of us is "wonderfully made" in the image of God. We, therefore, believe in the inherent dignity of every human being, dignity that no earthly power can take away. And central to that dignity is

freedom of religion: the right of every person to practice their faith how they choose, to change their faith if they choose, or to practice no faith at all and to do this free from persecution and fear.

Our faith teaches us that in the face of suffering, we can't stand idly by and that we must be that Good Samaritan. In Isaiah, we're told "to do right. Seek justice. Defend the oppressed." The Torah commands: "Know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt." The Koran instructs: "Stand out firmly for justice." So history shows that nations that uphold the rights of their people—including the freedom of religion—are ultimately more just and more peaceful and more successful. Nations that do not uphold these rights sow the bitter seeds of instability and violence and extremism. So freedom of religion matters to our national security.

As I've said before, there are times when we work with governments that don't always meet our highest standards, but they're working with us on core interests such as the security of the American people. At the same time, we also deeply believe that it's in our interest, even with our partners, sometimes with our friends, to stand up for universal human rights. So promoting religious freedom is a key objective of U.S. foreign policy. And I'm proud that no nation on Earth does more to stand up for the freedom of religion around the world than the United States of America.

It is not always comfortable to do, but it is right. When I meet with Chinese leaders—and we do a lot of business with the Chinese, and that relationship is extraordinarily important not just to our two countries, but to the world—but I stress that realizing China's potential rests on upholding universal rights, including for Christians and Tibetan Buddhists and Uighur Muslims.

When I meet with the President of Burma, a country that is trying to emerge out of a long darkness into the light of a representative government, I've said that Burma's return to the international community depends on respecting basic freedoms, including for Christians and Muslims. I've pledged our support to the people of Nigeria, who deserve to worship in their churches and mosques in peace, free from terror. I've put the weight of my office behind the efforts to protect the people of Sudan and South Sudan, including religious minorities.

As we support Israelis and Palestinians as they engage in direct talks, we've made clear that lasting peace will require freedom of worship and access to holy sites for all faiths. I want to take this opportunity to thank Secretary Kerry for his extraordinary passion and principled diplomacy for this cause—that he's brought to the cause of peace in the Middle East. [*Applause*] Thank you, John.

More broadly, I've made the case that no society can truly succeed unless it guarantees the rights of all its peoples, including religious minorities, whether they're Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan or Baha'i in Iran or Coptic Christians in Egypt. And in Syria, it means ensuring a place for all people: Alawites and Sunni, Shia and Christian.

So going forward, we will keep standing for religious freedom around the world. And that includes, by the way, opposing blasphemy and defamation of religion measures, which are promoted sometimes as an expression of religion, but in fact, all too often can be used to suppress religious minorities. We continue to stand for the rights of all people to practice their faiths in peace and in freedom. And we will continue to stand against the ugly tide of anti-Semitism that rears its ugly head all too often.

I look forward to nominating our next Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom to help lead these efforts. And we're moving ahead with our new strategy to partner more closely with religious leaders and faith communities as we carry out our foreign policy. And I want to thank Shaun Casey, from the Wesley Theological Seminary, for leading this work at the State Department. Shaun, I think, is here today, and we want to thank him for the outstanding work that he's doing. Thank you, Shaun.

So around the world, we're elevating our engagement with faith leaders and making it a regular part of our diplomacy. And today I invite you to join us in focusing on several pressing challenges. Let's do more together to advance human rights, including religious freedom. Let's do more to promote the development that Raj describes, from ending extreme poverty to saving lives, from HIV/AIDS to combating climate change so that we can preserve God's incredible creation. On all these issues, faith leaders and faith organizations here in the United States and around the world are incredible partners, and we're grateful to them.

And in contrast to those who wield religion to divide us, let's do more to nurture the dialogue between faiths that can break cycles of conflict and build true peace, including in the Holy Land.

And finally, as we build the future we seek, let us never forget those who are persecuted today, among them Americans of faith. We pray for Kenneth Bae, a Christian missionary who's been held in North Korea for 15 months, sentenced to 15 years of hard labor. His family wants him home. And the United States will continue to do everything in our power to secure his release because Kenneth Bae deserves to be free.

We pray for Pastor Saeed Abedini. He's been held in Iran for more than 18 months, sentenced to 8 years in prison on charges relating to his Christian beliefs. And as we continue to work for his freedom, today, again, we call on the Iranian Government to release Pastor Abedini so he can return to the loving arms of his wife and children in Idaho.

And as we pray for all prisoners of conscience, whatever their faiths, wherever they're held, let's imagine what it must be like for them. We may not know their names, but all around the world there are people who are waking up in cold cells, facing another day of confinement, another day of unspeakable treatment, simply because they are affirming God. Despite all they've endured, despite all the awful punishments if caught, they will wait for that moment when the guards aren't looking and when they can close their eyes and bring their hands together and pray.

In those moments of peace, of grace, those moments when their faith is tested in ways that those of us who are more comfortable never experience—in those faraway cells—I believe their unbroken souls are made stronger. And I hope that somehow they hear our prayers for them, that they know that, along with the spirit of God, they have our spirit with them as well and that they are not alone.

Today we give humble thanks for the freedoms we cherish in this country. And I join you in seeking God's grace in all of our lives. I pray that His wisdom will give us the capacity to do right and to seek justice and defend the oppressed wherever they may dwell.

I want to thank all of you for the extraordinary privilege of being here this morning. I want to God—I want to ask you for your prayers as I continue in this awesome privilege and responsibility as President of the United States. May God bless the United States of America, and God bless all those who seek peace and justice. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:11 a.m. at the Washington Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Reps. Louis B. Gohmert, Jr., and Janice K. Hahn, in their capacity as cochairs, and U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Rajiv Shah, in his capacity as keynote speaker, of the National Prayer Breakfast; Dale E. Jones, vice chairman and chief executive officer, Heidrick and Struggles International Inc., in his capacity as a member of the board of advisers of the Skinner Leadership Institute, cohost of the National Prayer Breakfast; President Thein Sein of Burma; Special Adviser to the Secretary of State for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Shaun Casey; and Naghmeh Abedini, wife of Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen imprisoned in Iran, and their children Jacob and Rebekka.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Michel Martelly of Haiti
February 6, 2014

President Obama. Well, it's a great pleasure to welcome President Martelly of Haiti to the Oval Office. Our two countries really brought about the trend towards independence in the Western Hemisphere, and we have had a long-standing relationship of many years. The bonds between our two peoples are extraordinarily strong, including the contributions made by Haitian Americans, who in all walks of life make enormous contributions to our own country.

Obviously, over the last several years, our relationship has been shaped in part by our desire to help Haiti rebuild after the devastating earthquake that took place. We're now at the 4-year anniversary of that tragic event that devastated such a large portion of Haiti—not only Haiti, but also devastated the Haitian economy. The good news is that because of not just the mobilization of international support, which the U.S. helped to lead, but also because of strong leadership from the Haitian people themselves and President Martelly, we've begun to see progress. The economy is growing, security is improving, infrastructure is getting rebuilt, rubble has been removed, health facilities are beginning to open up, schools are starting to get back into place, and businesses are starting to return to Haiti.

It's been a very slow and difficult process, and I think we are all recognizing that we have a lot more work to do. But my main message today to the President and to the people of Haiti is that the American people are committed to standing with you in this process. We want to make sure that all the children of Haiti can look forward to lives of opportunity and prosperity and security. And I'm very encouraged by the fact that Haiti has now made progress on an election law that could ensure elections this year and help to resolve some of the political roadblocks that stalled some progress in the country, and I appreciate the President's efforts on that front.

I'm looking forward to hearing where we can help in other reforms that I know he cares about, such areas as human rights and prison reform, the judiciary, dealing with issues of corruption that are inhibitors to progress in any country, including ours. And we will continue to stand by Haitian democracy, Haitian leadership, and the Haitian people in this slow and steady progress that needs to take place.

So, Mr. President, welcome. We're very proud of our relationship with Haiti, and we look forward to deepening it in the years to come.

President Martelly. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to first thank the people of the United States, the Government, and you, Mr. President, for always standing by the Haitian people. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the First Lady, Michelle Obama, in Haiti after the earthquake. I'd like to thank her for her support also.

Through this meeting, Mr. President, I hope we have a chance to discuss matters pertaining to security: security in Haiti, security in the region, our ability to fight together narcotraffic, and of course, talk also about my engagement in building a strong democratic state.

So thank you for hosting me. It's an honor to be here.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Agricultural Act of 2014 at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan
February 7, 2014

The President. Hello, Spartans! Go Green!

Audience members. Go White!

The President. [*Laughter*] Oh, thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat here.

The—it's good to be at Michigan State. Thank you, Ben, for that wonderful introduction. Give Ben a big round of applause. He's got his beautiful family right here. How did Dad do? Was he pretty good? Where—yes, there he is. He did good? I thought he did great.

It is good to be in East Lansing. It's good to be with all of you here today. I'm here because I've heard about all the great things that you're doing. And I want to thank Mayor Triplett and President Simon for hosting us.

I am also here to do some scouting on my brackets. [*Laughter*] I just talked to Coach Izzo; Spartans are looking pretty good. I know things were a little wild for a while, had some injuries. But the truth is that Coach Izzo, he always paces so that you peak right at the tournament. [*Applause*] That's a fact. Then, I got a chance to meet Mark Dantonio. All right. So you've already got a Rose Bowl victory. You guys are—you're greedy. [*Laughter*] You want to win everything.

But it's wonderful to be here. I love coming to Michigan. Mainly, I love coming to Michigan because of the people. But I also love coming here because there are few places in the country that better symbolize what we've been through together over these last 4, 5 years.

The American auto industry has always been the heartbeat of the Michigan economy and the heart of American manufacturing. So when that heartbeat was flatlining, we all pulled together, all of us—autoworkers who punched in on the line, management who made tough decisions to restructure, elected officials like Gary Peters and Mark Schauer who believed that—[*applause*]—folks who believed that rescuing America's most iconic industry was the right thing to do.

And today, thanks to your grit and your ingenuity and dogged determination, the American auto industry's engines are roaring again, and we are building the best cars in the world again. And some plants are running three shifts around the clock, something that nobody would have imagined just a few years ago. So—[*applause*].

I just had lunch with Detroit's new mayor, Mike Duggan. He told me if there's one thing that he wants everybody to know, it's that Detroit is open for business. And I have great confidence that he's going to provide the leadership that we need. Really proud of him. The point is, we've all had to buckle down. We've all had to work hard. We've had to fight our way back these past 5 years. And in a lot of ways, we are now better positioned for the 21st century than any other country on Earth.

This morning we learned that our businesses in the private sector created more than 140,000 jobs last month, adding up to about 8½ million new jobs over the past 4 years. Our unemployment rate is now the lowest it's been since before I was first elected. The—companies across the country are saying they intend to hire even more folks in the months ahead. And that's why I believe this can be a breakthrough year for America.

And I've come here today to sign a bill that, hopefully, means folks in Washington feel the same way, that instead of wasting time creating crises that impede the economy, we're going to have a Congress that's ready to spend some time creating new jobs and new opportunities and positioning us for the future and making sure our young people can take advantage of that future.

And that's important, because even though our economy has been growing for 4 years now, even though we've been adding jobs for 4 years now, what's still true—something that was true before the financial crisis, it's still true today—is that those at the very top of the economic pyramid are doing better than ever, but the average American's wages, salaries, incomes haven't risen in a very long time. A lot of Americans are working harder and harder just to get by, much less get ahead, and that's been true since long before the financial crisis and the great recession.

And so we've got to reverse those trends. We've got to build an economy that works for everybody, not just a few. We've got to restore the idea of opportunity for all people, the idea that no matter who you are, what you look like, where you came from, how you started out, what your last name is, you can make it if you're willing to work hard and take

responsibility. That's the idea at the heart of this country. That's what's at stake right now. That's what we've got to work on.

Now, the opportunity agenda I laid out in my State of the Union Address is going to help us do that. It's an agenda built around four parts. Number one, more new jobs in American manufacturing, American energy, American innovation, American technology. A lot of what you're doing here at Michigan State helps to spur on that innovation in all sorts of areas that can then be commercialized into new industries and to create new jobs.

Number two, training folks with the skills to fill those jobs, something this institution does very well.

Number three, guaranteeing access to a world-class education for every child, not just some. That has to be a priority. That means before they even start school, we're working on pre-K that's high quality and gets our young people prepared and then takes them all the way through college so that they can afford it, and beyond.

Number four, making sure our economy rewards honest work with wages you can live on and savings you can retire on and, yes, health insurance that is there for you when you need it.

Now, some of this opportunity agenda that I put forward will require congressional action, it's true. But as I said at the State of the Union, America does not stand still; neither will I. And that's why, over the past 2 weeks, I've taken steps without legislation—without congressional action—to expand opportunity for more families. We've created a new way for workers to start their own retirement savings. We've helped to make sure all of our students have high-speed broadband and high-tech learning tools that they need for this new economy.

But I've also said I'm eager to work with Congress wherever I can, because the truth of the matter is, is that America works better when we're working together. And Congress controls the purse strings at the Federal level, and a lot of the things that we need to do require congressional action.

And that is why I could not be prouder of our leaders who are here today. In particular, I could not be prouder of your own Debbie Stabenow, who has done just extraordinary work. So we all love Debbie for a lot of reasons. She's been a huge champion of American manufacturing, but really shepherded through this farm bill, which was a very challenging piece of business. She worked with Republican Senator Thad Cochran, who I think was very constructive in this process. We had Representatives Frank Lucas, a Republican, working with Collin Peterson, a Democrat. We had a terrific contribution from our own Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack and—who deserves a big round of applause.

And so Congress passed a bipartisan farm bill that is going to make a big difference in communities all across this country. And just so they don't feel left out, I want to recognize one of your Congressmen, who's doing an outstanding job, Dan Kildee, and somebody who was just a wonderful mentor to me when I was in the Senate and has been just a great public servant, not just for your State, but for the entire country, Carl Levin. He's always out there, especially when it comes to our men and women in uniform. We're very proud of him.

And while we're at it, we've got a couple of out-of-towners: Pat Leahy from Vermont—there are a lot of dairy farms up there, so he had something to do with it; and Amy Klobuchar from Minnesota. All that cold air is blowing from Minnesota down into—[*laughter*].

Now, despite its name, the farm bill is not just about helping farmers. Secretary Vilsack calls it a jobs bill, an innovation bill, an infrastructure bill, a research bill, a conservation bill. It's like a Swiss Army knife. [*Laughter*] It's like Mike Trout; it's like—for those of you who know baseball. [*Laughter*] It's somebody who's got a lot of tools. It multitasks. It's creating more good jobs, gives more Americans a shot at opportunity. And there are two big ways in which it does so.

First, the farm bill lifts up our rural communities. Over the past 5 years, thanks to the hard work and know-how of America's farmers, the best in the world, we've had the strongest

stretch of farm exports in our history. And when I'm traveling around the world, I'm promoting American agriculture. And as a consequence, we are selling more stuff to more people than ever before, supports about 1 million American jobs. What we grow here and that we sell is a huge boost to the entire economy, but particularly the rural economy.

Here at Michigan State, by the way, you are helping us to do even more. So I just got a tour of a facility where you're working with local businesses to produce renewable fuels. You're helping farmers grow crops that are healthier and more resistant to disease. Some students are even raising their own piglets on an organic farm. When I was in college, I lived in a pigsty—[*laughter*]—but I didn't work in one. That's—so I'm impressed by that. [*Laughter*] That's no joke, by the way. [*Laughter*] So your hygiene improves as you get older. [*Laughter*]

So we're seeing some big advances in American agriculture. And today, by the way, I'm directing my administration to launch a new Made in Rural America initiative to help more rural businesses expand and hire and sell more products stamped "Made in the U.S.A." to the rest of the world, because we've got great products here that need to be sold, and we can do even more to sell around the world.

But even with all this progress, too many rural Americans are still struggling. Right now 85 percent of counties experience what's called persistent poverty. Those are in rural areas. Before I was elected President, I represented Illinois, home of a couple of your Big Ten rivals, but also a big farming State. And over the years, I've seen how hard it can be to be a farmer. There are a lot of big producers who are doing really well, but there are even more small farms, family farms, where folks are just scratching out a living and increasingly vulnerable to difficulties in financing and all the inputs involved; farmers sometimes having to work off the farm, they've got a couple of jobs outside the farm just to get health care, just to pay the bills, trying to keep it in the family; and it's very hard for young farmers to get started.

And in these rural communities, a lot of young people talk about how jobs are so scarce, even before the recession hit, that they feel like they've got to leave in order to have opportunity. They can't stay at home, they've got to leave.

So that's why this farm bill includes things like crop insurance, so that when a disaster like the record drought that we're seeing across much of the West hits our farmers, they don't lose everything they've worked so hard to build. This bill helps rural communities by investing in hospitals and schools, affordable housing, broadband infrastructure, all the things that help attract more businesses and make life easier for working families.

This bill supports businesses working to develop cutting-edge biofuels, like some of the work that's being done here at Michigan State. That has the potential to create jobs and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. It boosts conservation efforts so that our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy places like the Mississippi River Valley and Chesapeake Bay.

It supports local food by investing in things like farmers markets and organic agriculture, which is making my wife very happy. And when Michelle is happy, I don't know about everybody being happy, but I know I'm happy. [*Laughter*] And so it's giving smaller producers, local producers, folks like Ben, the opportunity to sell more of their products directly, without a bunch of processing and distributors and middlemen that make it harder for them to achieve. And it means that people are going to have healthier diets, which is, in turn, going to reduce incidents of childhood obesity and keep us healthier, which saves us all money.

It does all this while reforming our agricultural programs, so this bill helps to clamp down on loopholes that allowed people to receive benefits year after year, whether they were planting crops or not. And it saves taxpayers hard-earned dollars by making sure that we only support farmers when disaster strikes or prices drop. It's not just automatic.

So that's the first thing this farm bill does: It helps rural communities grow, it gives farmers some certainty, it puts in place important reforms.

The second thing this farm bill does that is huge is help make sure America's children don't go hungry. Now—[*applause*]—and this is where Debbie's work was really important. One study shows that more than half of all Americans will experience poverty at some point during their adult lives. Now, for most folks, that's when you're young and you're eating ramen all the time. But for a lot of families, that—it's a crisis hits, you lose your job, somebody gets sick, strains on your budget; you have a strong work ethic, but it might take you 6 months, 9 months, a year to find a job. And in the meantime, you've got families to feed.

That's why, for more than half a century, this country has helped Americans put food on the table when they hit a rough patch or when they're working hard but aren't making enough money to feed their kids. They're not looking for a handout, these folks, they're looking for a hand up, a bridge to help get them through some tough times.

And we sure don't believe that children should be punished when parents are having a tough time. As a country, we're stronger when we help hard-working Americans get back on their feet, make sure that children are getting the nutrition that they need so that they can learn what they need in order to be contributing members of our society.

And that's the idea behind what's known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. A large majority of SNAP recipients are children or the elderly or Americans with disabilities. A lot of others are hard-working Americans who need just a little help feeding their families while they look for a job or they're trying to find a better one. And in 2012, the SNAP program kept nearly 5 million people—including more than 2 million children—out of poverty. Think about that: 5 million people.

That's why my position has always been that any farm bill I sign must include protections for vulnerable Americans, and thanks to the good work of Debbie and others, this bill does that. And by giving Americans more bang for their buck at places like farmers markets, we're making it easier for working families to eat healthy foods, and we're supporting farmers like Ben who make their living growing it. So it's creating new markets for produce farmers, and it means that people have a chance to directly buy from their farmers the kind of food that's going to keep them healthy.

And the truth is, a lot of folks go through tough times at some point in their lives. That doesn't mean they should go hungry, not in a country like America. So investing in the communities that grow our food, helping hard-working Americans put that food on the table, that's what this farm bill does, all while reducing our deficits through smart reforms.

It doesn't include everything that I'd like to see, and I know leaders on both sides of the aisle feel the same way. But it's a good sign that Democrats and Republicans in Congress were able to come through with this bill, break the cycle of shortsighted, crisis-driven, partisan decisionmaking, and actually get this stuff done. That's a good sign.

And that's the way you should expect Washington to work. That's the way Washington should continue to work. Because we've got more work to do. We've got more work to do to potentially make sure that unemployment insurance is put in place for a lot of folks out there who need it. We've got more work to do to pass a minimum wage. We've got more work to do to do immigration reform, which will help farmers like Ben.

So let's keep the momentum going here. And in the weeks ahead, while Congress is deciding what's next, I'm going to keep doing everything I can to strengthen the middle class, build ladders of opportunity in the middle class. And I sure hope Congress will join me, because I know that's what you're looking for out of your elected officials at every level.

So thank you, everybody. God bless you. I'm now going to sign this farm bill.

Hold on one second, I forgot to mention, Marcia Fudge was here. I wasn't sure whether she came to the event. I knew she flew in with me. So she does great work—[*applause*]—out of the great State of Ohio. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, the President sat down to sign the bill.*]

The President. Everybody can see?

Audience members. No.

The President. Oh-oh. Hey, guys, you got to sit down for a second so the big fancy cameras back there can—[*laughter*]. I mean, we appreciate you taking pictures, but—[*laughter*]. All right, I'm about to start signing.

[*The President signed the bill.*]

The President. This was good work. I'm going to use every pen. There you go. Hey!

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:16 p.m. in the Mary Anne McPhail Equine Performance Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ben LaCross, District 9 director, Michigan Farm Bureau Board of Directors; Tom Izzo, head coach of men's basketball, and Mark Dantonio, head football coach, Michigan State University; former Rep. Mark Schauer; and Michael N. Trout, centerfielder, Major League Baseball's Los Angeles Angels. H.R. 2642, approved February 7, was assigned Public Law No. 113–79.

The President's Weekly Address
February 8, 2014

Hi, everybody. In my State of the Union Address, I talked about the idea of opportunity for all. Opportunity is the idea at the heart of this country: that no matter who you are or how you started out, with hard work and responsibility, you can get ahead.

I ran for President to restore that idea, and I'm even more passionate about it today. Because while our economy has been growing for 4 years and those at the top are doing better than ever, average wages have barely budged. Too many Americans are working harder than ever just to get by, let alone get ahead, and that's been true since long before the recession hit.

We've got to reverse those trends. We've got to build an economy that works for everyone, not just a fortunate few. And the opportunity agenda I laid out last week will help us do that.

It's an agenda with four parts: number one, more new jobs; number two, training folks with the skills to fill those jobs; number three, guaranteeing every child access to a world-class education; and number four, making sure that hard work pays off, with wages you can live on, savings you can retire on, and health insurance that's there when you need it.

I want to work with Congress on this agenda wherever I can. But in this year of action, whenever I can take steps without legislation to expand opportunity for more American families, I will. I've got a pen, and I've got a phone: a pen to take executive action and a phone to rally citizens and business leaders who are eager to create new jobs and new opportunities. And we've already begun.

In Wisconsin, I ordered an across-the-board reform of our training programs to train folks with the skills employers need and then match them to good jobs that need to be filled right now. In Pittsburgh, I directed the Treasury to create MyRA, a new way for working Americans—even if you're not wealthy—to start your own retirement savings.

In Maryland, I rallied the leaders of some of America's biggest tech companies to help us make sure all our kids have access to high-speed Internet and up-to-date technology to help them learn the skills they need for the new economy. And at the White House, I brought together business leaders who have committed to helping more unemployed Americans find work, no matter how long they've been looking. And I directed the Federal Government to make hiring decisions the same way: based on whether applicants can do the job, not when they last had a job.

So when you hear me talking about using my pen and my phone to make a difference for middle class Americans and those working to get into the middle class, that's what I mean. And I'm going to keep asking students and parents and business leaders to help, because there are millions of Americans outside Washington who are tired of stale political arguments, ready to move this country forward, and determined to restore the founding vision of opportunity for all.

That's what I'm all about. Thanks, have a great weekend. And to our Olympians in Sochi: Go Team U.S.A.!

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:15 p.m. on February 7 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on February 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on February 8.

Remarks With President François Hollande of France at Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia
February 10, 2014

President Obama. Well, the—this has been a wonderful visit. And I want to thank François for joining us here today. I thought this was an appropriate way to start a state visit because what it signifies is the incredible history between the United States and France.

As one of our Founding Fathers, the person who drafted our Declaration of Independence, somebody who not only was an extraordinary political leader, but also one of our great scientific and cultural leaders, Thomas Jefferson represents what's best in America. But as we see as we travel through his home, what he also represents is the incredible bond and the incredible gifts that France gave to the United States, because he was a Francophile through and through.

He drew inspiration from the Enlightenment ideas that had been developed in France and throughout Europe, but he also drew from the arts, from the architecture, from the writings, from the culture, and from the cuisine of France. And so, in this sense, this home represents the bonds that helped to lead to the American Revolution, helped to influence the French Revolution, figures like Lafayette, who played such a central role in our own independence—all this is signified here at Monticello.

And our hope in starting our visit this way is that, just as we can extend back through generations to see the links between the United States and France, tomorrow we'll have an opportunity to talk about not only our current bonds and alliance, but also ways that we can strengthen our cooperation in the future.

And of course, this house also represents the complicated history of the United States. We just visited downstairs where we know that slaves helped to build this magnificent structure, and the complex relations that Jefferson, the drafter of the Declaration of Independence, had had to slavery. And it's a reminder for both of us that we are going to continue to fight on behalf of the rights of all peoples, something that I know France has always been committed to and we are committed to as well.

And I'm looking forward to talking about issues of human dignity and human rights not just in our own countries, but around the world as well.

So, Mr. President, welcome to Monticello, and we look forward to continuing our conversation tomorrow.

President Hollande. I would like to thank especially President Obama for having invited me to this house. This is Thomas Jefferson's house, which means that this was a man who understood what meant the century of Enlightenment, and he wanted to represent this light throughout this house. You can see light everywhere. You can see it in its objects, in the refinement of these objects, and its architecture.

So why is this house a symbol? Because here Lafayette was welcomed. Together, Lafayette and Jefferson imagined something that seemed impossible: namely, American independence and the rights of—human rights and the rights of the citizen. Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, and Lafayette was also involved in drafting the Rights of the Citizen, and they met together in this house.

There is something quite unique about Jefferson in the fact that he been Ambassador of the United States to France before becoming

U.S. President; I do believe that is the only American President to have had that experience. And he was U.S. Ambassador to France at the time of the French Revolution, and he departed from France in August of 1789, which means, after the 14th of July, the taking of the Bastille, he thought he had seen enough and that he could go back home. And then of course, he was involved in the governance of the United States before becoming President. And then Jefferson purchased Louisiana from Napoleon.

President Obama. Very good deal.

President Hollande. And today we are not demanding anything. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. It was a good bargain though. [*Laughter*]

President Hollande. I also wish to confirm that this bond that unites us through Jefferson and that these bonds are sustained over time, because he represents values and principles. Freedom, human dignity, rights—these are the values for which we are continuing to fight around the world, the United States and France. We were allies in the time of Jefferson and Lafayette. We are still allies today. We were friends in the time of Jefferson and Lafayette, and we will remain friends forever.

Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:32 p.m. in the Entrance Hall. President Hollande spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for President François Hollande of France

February 11, 2014

President Obama. Good morning, everybody. *Bonjour!* That's the extent of my French. [*Laughter*]

Few places in the world warm the heart like Paris in the spring. This morning, we're going to do our best with Washington in the winter. [*Laughter*]

France is America's oldest ally, and in recent years, we've deepened our alliance. And today, on behalf of the American people and Michelle and myself, it is a great honor to welcome my friend President Hollande and his delegation for their first state visit to the United States, in fact, the first state visit by a French President in nearly 20 years.

Yesterday, at Monticello, we reflected on the values that we share, the ideals at the heart of our alliance. Here, under the red, white, and blue and the blue, white, and red, we declare our devotion once more to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," to *"liberté, egalité,* and *fraternité."* [*Laughter*]

For more than two centuries, we have not only proclaimed our ideals, our citizens have bled to preserve them, from a field in Yorktown to the beaches of Normandy, to the mountains of Afghanistan. And today we are honored to be joined by two extraordinary men who were there those historic days 70 years ago. I ask them to stand, proud veterans of D-day who are here in attendance today.

So it's no exaggeration that we stand here because of each other. We owe our freedom to each other. Of course, we Americans also thank our French friends for so much else: this Capital City, designed by L'Enfant; our Statue of Liberty, a gift from France; and something many Americans are especially grateful for, New Orleans and the French Quarter. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, like generations before us, we now have the task not simply to preserve our enduring alliance, but to make it new for our time. No one nation can meet today's challenges alone or seize its opportunities. More nations must step up and meet the responsibilities of leadership, and that is what the United States and France are doing together.

To our French friends, I say let's do even more together, for the security of—that our citizens deserve, for the prosperity that they seek, and for the dignity of people around the

world who seek what we declared two centuries ago: those unalienable rights, those sacred rights of man.

President Hollande, members of the French delegation, we are honored to have you here as one of our strongest allies and closest friends. Welcome to the United States. *Bienvenue, mes amis.*

President Hollande. Mr. President, dear Barack, dear Michelle, ladies and gentlemen: It's cold in Washington. [*Laughter*] You're right. But it's a beautiful day——

President Obama. It's beautiful.

President Hollande. ——a great day for America and France. And I will speak in French because I am obliged to do that for my country.

[*At this point, President Hollande spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

We are received here, my delegation and myself, as friends. And I am particularly touched by this reception by the President of the United States. We are always united by a common history, from Yorktown to the beaches of Normandy. As you said so rightly, each of our countries knows what it owes to the other: its freedom.

Yesterday we were in Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's residence, a great American statesman, once Ambassador to France, who remains one of the most beautiful symbols of the ties that unite us. This afternoon, at the Arlington Cemetery, I shall award the Legion d'Honneur, the highest French distinction, to the American Unknown Soldier. And I shall present American veterans who fought in the Second World War with an award, and I'd like to pay tribute to these men.

Thus doing, I wish to demonstrate the fact that France will never forget the spirit of sacrifice shown by these American soldiers, nameless heroes who left their homes to liberate my country and Europe. We shall pay tribute to them during the celebrations that will take place in France to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Normandy landing. And I hope, Barack, that you will join me on the 6th of June, 2014, 70 years after D-day landing.

Our two countries hold universal values, values that inspired Eleanor Roosevelt and René Cassin to write together the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We stand together to fight terrorism. Today, still, France and the United States stand side by side to make these values prevail. We stand together with the United States to address the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and chemical weapons; together to solve the crises faced by the Middle East; together to support Africa's development; and together to fight global warming and climate change.

Today, we stand united, and we have built a model of friendship, a friendship that is the best recipe for a better world, a world such as the one that was dreamt by Thomas Jefferson and Lafayette. It is not just about friendship, it is about an alliance that will enable us to make this world a better place, a safer place, a more humane place.

Mr. President, I am proud to stand here. You are this great man of the United States of America, and you represent the United States of America, a country where everything is possible for who wants it, a country devoted to freedom and equality. Long live the United States. Long live France. Long live the Franco-American friendship. Thank you!

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where President Hollande was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, President Obama referred to Lansdale, PA, resident George A. Shenkle; and Keswick, VA, resident Arthur W. Ordel, Jr. President Hollande referred to Madison Heights, VA, resident Robert L. Sales; Vienna, VA, resident John C. Cheban; and Frederick, MD, residents Henry E. Ponton, Jr., and Charles S. Toms.

The President's News Conference With President François Hollande of France

February 11, 2014

President Obama. Good afternoon. *Bon après-midi.* Again, it's a great honor to welcome my friend and partner, President Hollande, back to the White House for this state visit. It is always a pleasure to host François. At Camp David, 2 years ago, I was trying to make the summit casual, and François, in true French style, showed up in a necktie. We tried to get him to take it off.

When I hosted him in Chicago for the NATO summit, I thought he'd try some of our local cuisine, a Chicago-style hot dog. I'm not sure he had one, but we do know that he has sampled American fast food in the past, because this happens to be the 40th anniversary of François's first trip to America as a student. And I understand, he traveled across our county studying the fast food industry. So if, back in 1974, you noticed a French guy poking around your local McDonald's, that was him. [*Laughter*] Now he's back as the 24th President of France. And Michelle and I look forward to hosting him tonight at a state dinner, with a different kind of American cuisine.

Now, Alexis de Tocqueville, that great son of France who chronicled our American democracy, wrote that even as we marvel at our freedom, there's nothing harder than learning how to use our freedom. It's a lesson that our two countries have learned over more than 200 years. Standing together and using our freedom to improve the lives of not only our citizens, but people around the world, is what makes France not only America's oldest ally, but also one of our closest allies.

Our military and intelligence personnel cooperate every day, keeping our nations secure and dealing with crises and challenges from Africa to the Persian Gulf. Our diplomats work side by side to help resolve conflicts and promote peace, from Syria to Iran. Our development experts help impoverished villages boost their agriculture and lift themselves out of poverty. And this level of partnership across so many areas would have been unimaginable even a decade ago. But it's a testament to how our two nations have worked to transform our alliance. And I want to salute President Hollande for carrying this work forward.

François, you haven't just spoken eloquently about France's determination to meet its responsibilities as a global leader, you've also acted. From Mali and the Central African Republic to Syria and Iran, you have shown courage and resolve. And I want to thank you for your leadership and for being such a strong partner to the United States.

And in that spirit, I'm grateful for the progress that we've made today in four key areas. First, we're standing shoulder to shoulder on the key challenges to global security. Our unity with our P5-plus-1 partners, backed with strong sanctions, has succeeded in halting and rolling back key parts of the Iranian nuclear program. We agree that next week's talks in Vienna will be an opportunity for Iran to show that it is serious about a comprehensive solution that assures the world that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only.

And President Hollande and I agree on the need to continue enforcing existing sanctions, even as we believe that new sanctions during these negotiations would endanger the possibility of a diplomatic solution. And we remain absolutely united on our ultimate goal, which is preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Just as our unity on Syria—and the credible threat of force—led to a plan for destroying Syria's chemical weapons, we're united on what needs to happen next there. Syria must meet its commitments, and Russia has a responsibility to ensure that Syria complies. And as talks continue in Geneva, we'll continue to strengthen the moderate opposition, and we call on the international community to stem the flow of foreign fighters into Syria.

This week, we're working with our Security Council partners to call for an end to indiscriminate attacks on civilians and to ensure

humanitarian aid workers have unimpeded access to Syrians in need. And we'll continue to work with France and others to bolster our partners in the region, including Lebanon.

More broadly, as Israelis and Palestinians move forward with talks, we agree that France and the European Union will have an important role in supporting a final agreement. And we also agreed to continue our cooperation on Mali and the Central African Republic, where leaders and communities need to show the courage to resist further violence and to pursue reconciliation.

Second key area: As major trading partners, we're working to boost exports and create jobs. I'm pleased to announce that we're launching a new economic dialogue to expand trade, increase the competitiveness of our businesses, spur innovation, and encourage new entrepreneurs. And President Hollande's visit to Silicon Valley this week underscores our commitment to new collaborations in science and technology.

Related to this, we've agreed to continue pursuing an ambitious and comprehensive Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. I want to thank President Hollande for his commitment to these negotiations. We need to get this done because an agreement could increase exports by tens of billions of dollars, support hundreds of thousands of additional jobs, both in the United States and the European Union, and promote growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

Number three, we've agreed to keep expanding the cooperation and clean energy partnerships that make our countries leaders in the fight against climate change. And even as we take steps at home to reduce carbon emissions, we'll work to help developing countries move to low-carbon growth. And next year's carbon climate conference in France will be an opportunity to forge a strong global agreement that reduces greenhouse gas emissions through concrete actions.

And finally, we're moving forward together on key global development initiatives: the food security and nutrition that can lift 50 million Africans out of poverty; our determination to replenish the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria; and I'm pleased that we're joining with partners around the world on a new global health security effort to combat infectious diseases and save lives.

So this is just some of the progress we're making together, using our freedoms, to borrow de Tocqueville's words, to advance security, prosperity, and human dignity around the world. And, François, in this work, I could not be more grateful for your partnership and your friendship. I especially want to thank you for honoring our D-day veterans today. And I'm very pleased to announce that I have accepted François's invitation and will travel to France in June to mark the 70th anniversary of D-day. I was there for the 65th anniversary, and it was an extraordinary experience. I'm looking forward to returning to honor our remarkable veterans and to reaffirm this extraordinary alliance.

President Hollande.

President Hollande. Mr. President, dear Barack, you receive me today as you had done the day after my election, with the same sincerity, with the same respect, and with the same friendship for France. You didn't know me back then. I knew you. There was a major difference there between us, because your election had been welcomed in France, beyond any political views, for it was a proof that America was moving forward once more. America was able to make something possible, to make progress possible.

When you received me here, it was in Camp David. Let's forget about the tie. As you can see, I'm wearing a tie today. [*Laughter*] But you welcomed me at a time that was challenging for Europe because what was at stake was the very existence of the euro zone: Was the euro zone going to be able to come out of this doubt that prevailed on the euro zone and on financial markets? And your call for solidarity and for growth was heard and was extremely useful back then. Since then, since this meeting in Camp David, Europe has come out of its financial crisis. It now has the relevant instruments for stability, and it has introduced banking union.

I also remember our meeting in Chicago. I remember that in Chicago I had announced that France would withdraw its combating troops from Afghanistan. That wasn't an easy decision to make, and it wasn't an easy decision to understand. And yet you accepted. And we remained in Afghanistan, in spite of this, at a lower level to the level we had anticipated in earlier times. But you accepted this movement, all the more so because this was part and parcel of a commitment I had made before the French people, similar to the one you made before the American people when it came to Iraq.

You recalled our historic relations. And I should not mention again the warm reception of yesterday at Monticello, but I'd like today, here, to pay tribute to the American Unknown Soldier fallen during World War II, to the veterans—American veterans—of the Second World War who enabled France to be liberated and indeed Europe.

We will commemorate the 70th anniversary of D-day landing. I had invited you to come and join me on the 6th of June, and you have just invited—accepted this invitation, which I welcome. This will be a strong message because we will commemorate the sacrifice made by those soldiers, but we will also celebrate reconciliation and peace.

This brings us back to our solid—our responsibilities in terms of security. France and the United States are two countries, which—due to their history, their place in history, but also due to their seat as permanent members of the U.N. Security Councils—can act on security throughout the world for freedom, democracy, the rule of law.

And this is precisely what France did—with the help of our American friends—in Mali in order to make it possible for Mali to recover its territorial integrity. This operation was successful, and it was only successful because a decision was made by the international community; it was successful because Americans took part and because Europeans helped as well as Americans, who also gave their support. And a President has now been elected in Mali, and the Malian state has now found its authority again.

We also intervened in the Central African Republic in a completely different context, admittedly, but the idea was to prevent what could have been a humanitarian disaster. There had been already brutal actions that affected a population that was already suffering a great deal. There are violence every day; there are clashes every day. But France does what it can with the help of other European nations and with the help of Americans.

And this bears witness to an exceptional situation in our history, because our countries have always been allies, have always been friends, but now we trust each other in an unprecedented manner. And this is characteristic of our personal relationship, but also of our goals—common goals.

Barack Obama reminded us of our position on Syria. We were prepared to resort to force. But we found another option: negotiation. We made it possible for part of the chemical weapons stockpile to be destructed. But we haven't found a political solution. Geneva is a possible step in the right direction, but we will have to make headway. We will have to cooperate more, make sure our services cooperate more. We need to support the opposition. We need to make sure that the choice is not between dictatorship on the one hand and chaos on the other, chaos with its lots of fundamentalists and extremists. And we found this potential solution.

Identically, on the Iranian dossier, we found common ground. It's a challenging issue, and finding a final agreement will be challenging. But the Iranian nuclear program has been suspended, and this is precisely the outcome of our collaboration, collaboration between France and the United States of America.

We also act in the Middle East, and I welcome the American initiative to resume negotiations. A framework agreement needs to be signed now, and France and Europe will certainly give their support to that two-state solution.

We are also extremely attentive to what happens in Lebanon. Lebanon is a country with

which France has historic ties. There again France and the United States stand side by side in order to help this country resist this massive inflow of refugees and with those risks of clashes that are ubiquitous and this risk of return to civil war that is a reality. So we need to support Lebanon and to make sure that it is supported in its unity and in its integrity.

We also help Jordan receive refugees. So on all international issues, we have convergent views and we stand united. Not that we never debate or that we never partly disagree; we might be allies and friends, but we always respect each other's sovereignty. That is a fundamental principle in our relation.

We also act on the economic front. America experiences recovery in its growth due to the policy and the political choices made, due to steps made by the United States; the United States of America trusts innovation, energy. It also benefits from a low cost of energy and bold decisions. This economic recovery in the United States is an opportunity for Europe, but it also is an example to be followed, a reference that should encourage us to promote competitivity through the necessary means, but also to promote innovation and new energy. And that is precisely the meaning of my visit to the Silicon Valley tomorrow.

Finally, we agreed with our American friends to sign a partnership agreement between Europe and the United States, with the best intentions to open up markets, to remove NTBs—non-tariff barriers—to make sure that the same opportunities be offered to all companies so that they can make proposals and tender for markets.

Of course, each country has its own position. We all know what mandate was given to the European Commission. We all know how concerned we were when it came to farming, agriculture, or to cultural products. But we really want to reach this agreement because this agreement will contribute to growth. Developing world trade in a balanced manner is a precious contributing factor to growth for companies.

And now climate change. How not to mention climate change when France next year will convene and host a conference? It's not just about hosting a conference and having our hotels full. No, it's about defending a global—reaching a global goal, because there is a danger. We want a serious and comprehensive agreement, one that will enable all countries—developing countries, developed countries—to work together towards a number of common goals.

Food security, development, the struggle against AIDS are three other issues on which we work together. But there are so many subjects I could mention. And every single time I would mention one of those issues, I would have to bear witness of the quality of our relations and of our trust, including on the most delicate issues and the most challenging ones.

I was referring to history earlier on. It unites us. Tocqueville is certainly a reference. Always a reference that is current in France: How far can you go when it comes to equality and how far can you go when it comes to freedom? And the revolutionaries who wanted the independence of America, those who wanted a republic in France had this thing in common: They wanted to be as bold as possible when it comes to freedom and liberty, and they wanted to be as respectful as possible when it comes to equality. This is precisely what the American Dream is made of, and it is also what the "French dream" is made of. Even though many have their own little dream, but the ambition remains exactly the same. We want to be together again.

Thank you.

President Obama. To—we've got a couple of questions each. Let's start with—where's Mark Landler? There he is. Mark, New York Times.

Syria/Iran

Q. Good afternoon. Both of you talked about Syria a good deal in your opening remarks, and I wanted to ask a bit about that. The latest round of the Geneva II talks have proven to be as unproductive as the first round was. The conventional—the chemical weapons agreement that you both alluded to has removed some weapons, but by all accounts, it's a small fraction of the overall stockpile the

Asad regime has, and the Syrians have missed a couple of deadlines. And as I don't need to tell you, the Syrian regime is essentially starving thousands of Syrians in Homs and elsewhere. Everybody agrees that more pressure needs to be brought to bear on the Asad regime to change this deadly equation. And so I wonder, beyond the general statements you made, what additional, tangible steps did you discuss in your meetings today to help the moderate opposition to try to change that equation on the ground?

And secondly, for *Monsieur le Presidente*——

President Obama. Uh-oh, hold on.

[*At this point, the reporter spoke briefly in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Q. ——I forget my French; I'm going to ask in English. [*Laughter*]

[*The reporter continued in English as follows.*]

Q. How is it okay for a trade delegation with a hundred French CEOs to travel to Tehran to explore business opportunities when the P5 and the E3-plus-3 have committed to maintaining the strength and integrity of the sanctions regime? Thank you.

President Obama. Okay. Why don't I take a stab first at the Syria question? We still have a horrendous situation on the ground in Syria. I don't think anybody disputes that. And what is absolutely clear is that, with each passing day, more people inside of Syria are suffering. The state of Syria itself is crumbling. That is bad for Syria. It is bad for the region. It is bad for global national security, because what we know is, is that there are extremists who have moved into the vacuum in certain portions of Syria in a way that could threaten us over the long term.

So this is one of our highest national security priorities, and I know that François feels the same way, and many of our European partners as well as our partners in the region feel the same way.

The Geneva process recognizes that if we're going to solve this problem, then we have to find a political solution. And the first Geneva conference committed to a transition process that would preserve and protect the state of Syria, would accommodate the various sectarian interests inside of Syria so that no one party was dominant, and would allow us to return to some semblance of normalcy and allow all the people who have been displaced to start moving back in. We are far from achieving that yet.

I would not completely discount the fact that in this latest round of negotiations, what you saw was a coherent, cohesive, reasonable opposition in the same room for the first time negotiating directly with the regime.

Now, the regime—Asad's regime—wasn't particularly responsible. And I think even some of their patrons were disturbed by their belligerence. But we are going to continue to commit to not just pressure the Asad regime, but also to get countries like Russia and Iran to recognize that it is in nobody's interest to see the continuing bloodshed and collapse that's taking place inside that country.

Now, you ask tangible steps that we can take. Both France and the United States continue to support a moderate opposition. We are continuing to provide enormous amounts of humanitarian aid. One of the problems we have right now is humanitarian access to deliver that aid. And as we speak, today in the U.N. Security Council, we will be debating a resolution that would permit much greater access for humanitarian aid workers to get food, water, shelter, clothing, fuel to people who need it.

Now, there is great unanimity among most of the Security Council on this resolution. Russia is a holdout. And Secretary Kerry and others have delivered a very direct message to the Russians that they cannot say that they are concerned about the well-being of the Syrian people when there are starving civilians, and that it is not just the Syrians that are responsible; the Russians, as well, if they are blocking this kind of resolution. So that is an example of the kinds of diplomatic work that we are engaging in right now.

But, Mark, nobody is going to deny that there's enormous frustration here. And I think the underlying premise to the question may be, is there additional direct action or military

action that can be taken that would resolve the problem in Syria? I have said throughout my Presidency that I always reserve the right to exercise military action on behalf of America's national security interests. But that has to be deployed wisely. And I think that what we saw with respect to the chemical weapons situation was an example of the judicious, wise use of possible military action.

In partnership with France, we said we would be prepared to act if Syria did not. Syria and Russia came to the conclusion that they needed to, for the first time, acknowledge the presence of chemical weapons and then agree to a very extensive deal to get those chemical weapons out.

You're right that so far, they have missed some deadlines. On the other hand, we've completely chronicled all the chemical weapons inside of Syria. A portion of those chemical weapons have been removed. There has been a reaffirmation by the Syrians and Russia that all of it has to be removed, and concrete steps are being taken to remove it. And we will continue to keep the pressure on. But we now have a U.N. mandate, with consequences if there's a failure, something that we did not have before.

Whether we can duplicate that kind of process when it comes to the larger resolution of the problem, right now we don't think that there is a military solution, per se, to the problem. But the situation is fluid, and we are continuing to explore every possible avenue to solve this problem, because it's not just heartbreaking to see what's happening to the Syrian people, it's very dangerous for the region as a whole, including friends and allies and partners like Lebanon or Jordan that are being adversely impacted by it.

But let me just make one last comment with respect to the Iran sanctions. We have been extraordinarily firm that even during this interim agreement, we will fully enforce all applicable sanctions. In fact, we have taken various steps just over the last 6, 7 weeks to identify companies that we felt were violating those sanctions and have been very clear to the Iranians that there's not going to be any letup.

In discussions with President Hollande, he feels the same way, as do all the P5-plus-1 members. And so businesses may be exploring, are there some possibilities to get in sooner rather than later if and when there is an actual agreement to be had, but I can tell you that they do so at their own peril right now because we will come down on them like a ton of bricks with respect to the sanctions that we control, and we expect full compliance with respect to the P5-plus-1 during this interim. We don't want new sanctions because the ones we have in place are already squeezing Iran and brought them to the table, but we also want to send a message to the Iranians that if they don't resolve this broader issue of their nuclear program, that there will be consequences and that the sanctions regime not only will stay in place, but will likely be tightened in the event that these talks fail.

President Hollande. Barack gave you a very comprehensive answer, so I shall now sketch the French approach on the issues that were mentioned only in a few words. First of all, Geneva II: The only purpose of this conference is to make political transition possible. It's not about discussing humanitarian measures only. It's all about making sure that a political change be possible, which eventually will have to take place in Syria. We encouraged the democratic opposition to go to Geneva and to demonstrate that they are prepared to commit themselves to this process and to this approach. And if some of them are blocking, there's no prize for guessing who it is; it is the Syrian regime.

One other observation, a conclusion, as a matter of fact: We should help along the humanitarian situation, and that is why a resolution will be voted at the NUSC. And we will see again who speaks clearly on the issue of the Syrian question and who is partisan. How can you object to humanitarian corridors? Why would you prevent the vote of a resolution if, in good faith, it is all about saving human lives? So we decided to go all the way and to get these clarifications.

Third question, the chemical weapons stockpile: Barack Obama and myself, when we

were presented with a proof of the use that had been made by the Asad regime of chemical weapons, we decided that resorting to force was an option. And it is precisely because we made this decision that the option of a negotiation was also kept on the agenda. It is precisely for that reason that President Putin made this offer in circumstances you are all familiar with. This led to the destruction of some of the chemical weapons.

But I agree with you, it is a very long-winded process, it's only partial destruction, and it certainly doesn't go nearly far enough. So rules were adopted, particularly within the framework of the Security Council resolution, in case of nonobservance. And we shall resort to these measures and enforce them. Chemical weapons have to be destroyed fully, and pressure will be exerted fully.

And then there are choices. We chose to support the democratic opposition. We chose to make sure that the democratic opposition is an alternative, even though negotiations will have to take place at the Geneva Conference.

You asked me a question about French businessmen in Iran, that trip to Iran. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the French situation, the President of the Republic is not the president of the employers union in France, and he certainly doesn't wish to be. And I don't think anyone wishes for him to be so. So companies just make their decisions when it comes to traveling. But I certainly let them know that sanctions were in force and would remain in force. And if contacts were to be made with a view to a new situation in Iran, a situation where Iran would have renounced the nuclear weapon fully and comprehensively, well, unless such a new situation would prevail, no commercial agreement could be signed. That's what I told French businessmen, and they are very much aware of this situation.

And as far as sanctions are concerned, they will only be lifted if and when there is a definite agreement. And during this period of an interim agreement, they remain in force.

A French question, perhaps now? Le Figaro.

Europe-U.S. Relations/France-U.S. Relations/National Security Agency's Electronic Surveillance Program/Iran

Q. [*Inaudible*]—for the French nation and for taking our questions. You have actually praised and granted—praised France very warmly today and granted our President the first state visit of your second term. Does that mean that France has become the best European ally of the U.S. and has replaced Great Britain——

President Obama. Oh, goodness. [*Laughter*]

Q. ——in that role? And if so, why not extend to France the no-spying agreement that you have with England after the big scandal of the NSA's surveillance program?

[*The reporter asked a question in French, which was translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Q. And, Mr. President, you praised the excellency of the Franco-American cooperation. But on Iran, are there differences in terms of analysis between France and America on the necessity to have an ambitious agreement? Do you fear that Americans be prepared to make too many concessions? Thank you.

President Obama. First of all, I have two daughters. [*Laughter*] And they are both gorgeous and wonderful, and I would never choose between them. And that's how I feel about my outstanding European partners. All of them are wonderful in their own ways.

Now, to this—to the serious part of the question, what I do believe is, is that the U.S.-French alliance has never been stronger. And the levels of cooperation that we're seeing across a whole range of issues is much deeper than it was, I think, 5 years ago, 10 years ago, 20 years ago. And that's good for France, it's good for the United States, it's good for the world, because we share certain values and certain commitments and are willing to act on behalf of those commitments and values.

With respect to the NSA, obviously, I expressed my strong commitment to making sure that our rules and how we approach intelligence and surveillance, not just here in the—not just

with respect to any particular country, but worldwide, that we do it in a way that takes into account the incredible changes in technology and the new capacities that have evolved over the last several years.

And the first place that we look to in terms of how do we make sure that our rules are compatible with our partnerships and our friendships and our alliances was—were countries like France that have been long-time allies of ours and some of our closest partners. It's not actually correct to say that we have a "no-spy agreement" with Great Britain. That's not actually what happens. Well, we don't have—there's no country where we have a no-spy agreement. We have, like every other country, an intelligence capability, and then we have a range of partnerships with all kinds of countries. And we've been in consultations with the French Government to deepen those commitments.

At the same time, what I've also said, both publicly and privately—and I want to reiterate today to the French press—is that we are committed to making sure that we are protecting and concerned about the privacy rights not just of Americans, not just of our own citizens, but of people around the world as well.

That's a commitment, by the way, that's fairly unprecedented in terms of any country's intelligence operations. And what we've said is, is that we are putting rules in place so that we're not engaging in what some of the speculation has been. When it comes to ordinary citizens in France, we are respectful of their privacy rights, and we are going to make sure that our rules are abiding by concerns about those privacy rights.

We do remain concerned, as France is and as most of the EU is, with very specific potential terrorist networks that could attack us and kill innocent people. And we're going to have to continue to be robust in pursuit of those specific leads and concerns, but we have to do it in a way that is compatible with the privacy rights that people in France rightly expect just like they do here in the United States.

And the last point, just because I know you asked it of President Hollande, but I want to go ahead and comment on this: The reason Iran is at the table is because we have a very high threshold in terms of what we expect out of Iran to prove to us that they're not pursuing nuclear weapons. And we were able to stitch together an international coalition to apply sanctions to make sure that would be the case.

I don't think the concern during the course of these negotiations is whether or not we are going to be making too many concessions. I think the concern is going to be whether or not Iran can recognize the opportunity to prove in a verifiable fashion to the world, in ways that scientists and technical experts can confirm, that any nuclear program they have is for peaceful purposes.

And the facts are what will guide these negotiations. If they meet what technically gives us those assurances, then there's a deal to be potentially made; if they don't, there isn't. And it's not subject to a whole lot of interpretation. There are some judgment issues involved, but part of the reason we're where we are right now is because Iran hasn't been able to give those assurances to anybody in the international community that they weren't pursuing a nuclear weapon. That's why there was such unanimity in applying the sanctions and keeping them in place.

President Hollande. In response to your first question, well, I have four children, so that makes it even more difficult for me to make any choice at all. But we're not trying to be anyone's favorite. There are historic links, we share common values, and I can see that views converge on many issues. But it's not about hierarchy, it's just about being useful to the world, because the friendship between the United States and France is not just about strengthening our ties—economic ties, cultural or personal ties—and that already would be a great deal. It's not just about bringing our two societies closer to one another. It's not just about sharing technology. No, what makes this friendship between the United States of America and France is the fact that we can hold values in a—at a specific point in time with this American Presidency and with this French Presidency, if I may say so.

With regards to Iran, your second question, just as the United States, we wanted to work on the basis of the P5 scenario. This was the basis of our action. Nothing prevented us from having bilateral contacts, and I had some bilateral contacts; in New York, during the UNGA, I received President Rouhani during the General Assembly. So it is perfectly legitimate for discussions to take place. However, we had to meet together in order to be strong together and in order to make sure that our toughness brings about this interim agreement, which it did.

But there is still work to be done. Just because we signed an interim agreement for a few months doesn't mean that there is no longer an Iranian problem. There is an Iranian problem, for we need to make sure that Iran renounce the nuclear weapon in a definite and comprehensive manner.

The NSA now. I was going to say the question wasn't asked to me, but President Obama answered the question, so I'll answer the question too, even though if you choose to ask me a more specific question, I can be more precise. But following the revelations that appeared due to Mr. Snowden, we clarified things, President Obama and myself clarified things. Then—this was in the past. And then we endeavored towards cooperation. We wanted to fight against terrorism. But we also wanted to meet a number of principles. And we are making headway in this cooperation.

Mutual trust has been restored, and that mutual trust must be based on respect for each other's country, but also based on the protection of private life, of personal data, the fact that any individual, in spite of technological progress, can be sure that he is not being spied on. These are principles that unite us.

President Obama. National Public Radio.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Q. Thank you very much. Mr. President, yesterday your administration again delayed the ACA employer mandate for midsized companies. Last week, your economic adviser, Jason Furman, talked about the new choices that people have to find health care outside the workplace. I wonder if you could first explain the delay and then also talk about whether over the long term you see a future where health insurance is less tied to the workplace.

President Obama. Well——

Q. And——

President Obama. Oh, I'm sorry.

Q. ——if I may, for President Hollande.

President Obama. Of course.

Q. You both talked about the pursuit of the Transatlantic Trade Agreement. I wonder if you have followed the domestic battle here over fast-track authority and if that raises questions in your mind about whether such a deal could be ratified.

President Obama. Okay. The announcement yesterday was fairly straightforward. The overwhelming majority of firms in this country already provide health insurance to their employees and are doing the right thing. The small percentage that do not, many of them are very small and are already exempted by law. So you have just this small category of folks who don't provide health insurance, weren't exempted by law. They are supposed to make sure that they meet their responsibilities so that their employees aren't going to the emergency room jacking up everybody else's costs and the employers end up not having any responsibility for that.

What we did yesterday was simply to make an adjustment in terms of their compliance, because for many of these companies, just the process of complying—they're midsized, between 50 and 100 folks—it may take them some time, even if they're operating in good faith. And we want to make sure that the purpose of the law is not to punish them, it's simply to make sure that they are either providing health insurance to their employees or that they're helping to bear the costs of their employees getting health insurance.

And that's consistent, actually, with what we've done in the individual mandate. The vast majority of Americans want health insurance. Many of them couldn't afford it; we provide them tax credits. But even with the tax credits, in some cases they still can't afford it, and we have hardship exemptions, phase-ins, to make

sure that nobody is unnecessarily burdened. That's not the goal. The goal is to make sure that folks are healthy and have decent health care.

And so this was an example of, administratively, us making sure that we're smoothing out this transition, giving people the opportunities to get right with the law, but recognizing that there are going to be circumstances in which people are trying to do the right thing and it may take a little bit of time.

Now, our goal here is not to punish folks. Our goal is to make sure that we've got people who can count on the financial security that health insurance provides. And where we've got companies that want to do the right thing and are trying to work with us, we want to make sure that we're working with them as well. And that's going to be our attitude about the law generally: How do we make it work for the American people and for their employers in an optimal sort of way?

What was the second part of that health care question?

Q. Long term?

President Obama. Long term, in terms of employer-based. Well, look, we have a unique system compared to many parts of the world, including France, where, partly because of historical accident and some decisions that FDR made during wartime back in World War II, our health care has been much more tied to employers. That's not the case in most other developed countries.

It has worked for a long time, but what is also true is that it has meant for a lot of U.S. companies a greater burden, more costs relative to their international competitors. That's a challenge. It's also meant that folks who were self-employed, for example, or who were independent contractors, weren't always getting the same deal as somebody who had a job. It meant that folks who worked for small businesses sometimes had more trouble getting decent premiums and decent rates than folks with large companies. So there was—it just created a great amount of unevenness in the system.

I don't think that an employer-based system is going to be, or should be, replaced anytime soon. But what the Affordable Care Act does do is, it gives people some flexibility. It says if I'm working at a big company like IBM or Google, and I decide I want to start my own company, that I'm not going to be inhibited from starting a new company because I'm worried about keeping health insurance for myself and my family. I can go make that move. If I'm a woman who is—[*inaudible*]—and I'd really like to work with him on the farm, but we can't afford health insurance on our own, so I've been working at the county clerk's office for the last 10 years. Now maybe I've got the opportunity to no longer work in a different job and instead work on that farm and increase the likelihood of economic success for my family. So it's giving people more flexibility and more opportunity to do what makes sense for them. And ultimately, I think that's going to be good for our economy.

But we understood from the start that there were going to be some challenges in terms of transition. When you've had one system where a whole lot of people did not have any health insurance whatsoever for a very long period of time and we finally passed a law to fix that, we knew that there were going to be some bumps and transitions in that process. And that's what we're working with all the stakeholders involved to address. Okay?

Oh, you had a——

President Hollande. The question on the T–TIP, the trade partnership, you wanted to know when this partnership would be signed. Well, we discussed it with President Obama. I'm aware of the debate that is currently underway in Congress. But as long as principles have been set up, as long as mandates have been decided and the interests of everyone are known, speed is not of the essence. What we need is to find a solution. Of course, a speedy agreement would be a good thing because otherwise there will be fears and threats. So if we are—act in good faith, if we respect each other, and if we want to promote growth, as we said a few moments ago, well, we can't go faster.

And I think now we'll here a question from Mr. Prost.

U.S. Economy/European Economy/France-U.S. Economic Relations

Q. Since last year, foreign investments in France have been crumbling, and we are not benefiting in France from the world recovery. President Obama, do you think that Mr. Hollande doesn't do much to encourage American investors to invest in France?

And, Mr. Hollande, you will meet businessmen. For them, you are a Socialist, you think that the world of finance is an enemy, and you tax wealth at 75 percent. So how on Earth are you going to convince businessmen here? And what will you tell Pierre Gattaz, the head of the employers union in France, who said here in Washington that he wanted no compensation for the labor cost cuts?

President Obama. It's good to know that reporters have something in common in France and the United States. [*Laughter*]

President Hollande. These would be? Which one would these be? [*Laughter*]

President Obama. I think that all of us were traumatized by the crisis of 2007, 2008. And the United States has to take responsibility for its role in that crisis. We made some quick decisions that allowed us to stabilize the financial markets and begin the long process of recovery, but it was painful, it was slow. And it was only because of the incredible resilience of the American people and our businesses—as well as, I believe, some well-timed policies—that we were able to begin a growth process that we've now sustained for some time. And we've brought our unemployment rate down.

But Europe has a different set of challenges because of the euro zone, because of the nature of the—a shared currency, but not completely shared governance and supervisory authorities. That has created some particular difficulties that François and others have had to deal with that we did not have to deal with as a country with a reserve currency that could make some independent choices.

Despite that, I think Europe actually has made enormous strides over the last year. France, in particular, has taken some tough structural reforms that I think are going to help them be more competitive in the future. I think all of us in the developed world are having to balance the need for growth and competitiveness, to be—what we say in America—lean and mean, and make sure that we are maximizing efficiency as well as innovation, but also do it in a way that allows for the benefits of growth to be broad based and so that workers are all benefiting from some sense of security and decent wages and rising incomes and the ability to retire securely.

And so each country is going to have different circumstances. The kinds of reforms we need in this country right now revolve around things like investing in infrastructure, where we have not made the kind of strides that I'd like us to see and would actually boost growth even faster. We're going to have to invest in skills training, which every country is going to have to do, because businesses will locate where they think they've got the most capable, most highly skilled workers. We still have to do more on the innovation front. As innovative as we are, I think we're still underinvesting in research and development.

So America has some inherent strengths, but we also have some areas where we've got to make progress. And I think François would be the first to say that France is in the same position. I would certainly encourage American companies to look at opportunities for investment in France. I'd encourage them even more to look at opportunities to invest money back in the United States. And I would welcome any French companies who want to come here to do business.

But one of the great things about our commercial relationship, which is also part of the reason why I think the Transatlantic Trade Partnership could be valuable, is a lot of the growth is in small and medium-size businesses, and they are the ones who could stand to benefit greatly from export. They don't have the ability to decide where to invest; they're going to be in their home countries. If we can open up trade opportunities for them—because they don't have a lot of lawyers, they don't have a lot

of accountants, they can't move locations and open up new plants in different places—if we expand trade opportunities for them, that can mean jobs and growth in France; it can mean jobs and growth here in the United States. And so I'm hopeful that we can get this deal, which will be a tough negotiation, but I'm confident we can actually get it done.

President Hollande. France is one of the world's countries that receives the largest amount of foreign investments, one of the world countries that is the most open to foreign capitals. And I want to strengthen and enhance this attractiveness of France.

If you look at physical investments, real investments—not just financial investments, not transfers between companies—if you look at genuine investments, tangible investments in France, factories, job creation, well, in spite of a crisis, in 2013, we maintained the level of investment in France, which bears witness to the confidence in France, in France's talent, know-how, companies. And this is nothing new. There are more than 2,000 American companies that are—work in France, employing 500,000 people in my country. And the United States of America are one of the main investors in France. And I hope that this trend will be confirmed and strengthened in the future.

And Barack is perfectly right: I have nothing to fear from French investments here in the United States. There are many French companies here in the United States, and they create 500,000 jobs, not all in the Silicon Valley, everywhere in the United States. And when talents come and invest in the U.S., well, this is good for the United States, and this is good for France.

I don't have this vision of focusing on protection and blaming anyone who invests abroad, because they will bring about new technologies and know-how. And it will be useful, especially if they come back. So we need to make efforts when it comes to attractiveness.

And soon I shall invite many foreign companies to take part to an "attractivity council," to the—which we call the Invest in France Council, to see what can be done to improve the situation in France, including when it comes to tax stability, for this what is very often referred to—or the stability of rules, because companies want visibility, first and foremost.

But American companies that have operations in France, ask them why they stay, why they invest in France. Well, it is precisely because they find French society particularly welcoming for them.

You also asked me a question on a statement that was made by Mr. Gattaz, the employers union president, on what I called the "responsibility pact." Well, this sound has nothing to do with the declaration of a statement. What is the responsibility pact? This I'm explaining mostly to American journalists because French journalists are familiar with it. This responsibility pact is about mobilizing the entire country to reach one goal.

Barack Obama mentioned the American economy's resilience following the crisis. Well, there comes a point where, after an ordeal, you have to be stronger than you were before the ordeal, before the crisis. You need to be able to mobilize more strength, more energy. You need to be able to make sure that the economy focuses not on what was before, but on what will be after. This is precisely what is at the very root of this recovery in the American economy.

Companies mobilized their workers to go ahead, and this is precisely the spirit of this responsibility pact. We have modernized our labor markets, we have modernized and updated vocational training. There's a whole list of things that we have done and are doing, but there are other things we can do. We want to strengthen competitivity, lower labor costs, streamline regulations, create more visibility in terms of tax regime. But everyone has to do its bit.

The state is going to make an effort. There are tax breaks that have already been granted. We also need to look at fiscal policies in order to have sufficient room for maneuver, and commitments will have to be made. But these commitments need to be shared by companies and businesses in order to create jobs, in order to improve vocational training, to fight against the outsourcing of activities, to promote invest-

ments. And I hope that discussions will move along quickly between employers unions and employees unions, because this is a prerequisite for confidence. And that it the key word: confidence, trust. It is true of international relations, but it is also true of the economy.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. President Hollande referred to President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward J. Snowden, who is accused of leaking classified documents to members of the news media; and Pierre Gattaz, president, Movement of the Enterprises of France (MEDEF). He also referred to his children Flora, Julien, Thomas, and Clemence Hollande. President Hollande and some reporters spoke in French, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the Retirement of Abraham H. Foxman as National Director of the Anti-Defamation League
February 11, 2014

For decades, Abe Foxman has been a tireless voice against anti-Semitism and prejudice in all of its forms, always calling us to reject hatred and embrace our common humanity. Michelle and I wish him well as he prepares to leave the leadership of the Anti-Defamation League, an organization that he built and led with such passion and persistence. Abe is irreplaceable, but the causes that he has dedicated his life to will continue to inspire people in the United States, Israel, and around the world.

Statement on Releasing the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking
February 11, 2014

Like other forms of illicit trade, wildlife trafficking undermines security across nations. Well-armed, well-equipped, and well-organized networks of criminals and corrupt officials exploit porous borders and weak institutions to profit from trading in poached wildlife. Record high demand for wildlife products, coupled with inadequate preventative measures and weak institutions has resulted in an explosion of illicit trade in wildlife in recent years.

That trade is decimating iconic animal populations. Today, because of the actions of poachers, species like elephants and rhinoceroses face the risk of significant decline or even extinction. But it does not have to be that way. We can take action to stop these illicit networks and ensure that our children have the chance to grow up in a world with and experience for themselves the wildlife we know and love.

Addressing these challenges requires a U.S. strategy that is proactive, recognizes immediate imperatives, and balances our strengths and expertise to address challenges comprehensively over the long term. This is a global challenge requiring global solutions. So we will work with foreign governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to maximize our impacts together. Our efforts will aim to strengthen enforcement, reduce demand, and increase cooperation to address these challenges.

The entire world has a stake in protecting the world's iconic animals, and the United States is strongly committed to meeting its obligation to help preserve the Earth's natural beauty for future generations.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as part of the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President François Hollande of France
February 11, 2014

President Obama. Good evening, everybody. *Bonsoir.* Please, have a seat. I have now officially exhausted my French. [*Laughter*] Michelle and I are so honored to welcome you to the White House as we host President Hollande and his delegation for this historic state visit between our nations, the first in nearly 20 years.

I think we have a translation. Is that correct? No? You don't want me to translate. [*Laughter*] Apparently not.

At our press conference today, I quoted Alexis de Tocqueville, that son of France who in 1831 set out across our young country and chronicled our American democracy. And those who have—are familiar with de Tocqueville are always amazed by how well he understood this Nation of ours and captured its spirit as well as anybody ever has. And tonight I'd like to share some of his lesser known observations.

About American dining, de Tocqueville wrote, "The absence of wine at our meals at first struck us as very disagreeable; and we still can't understand the multitude of things that [Americans] succeed in introducing into their stomachs." [*Laughter*] So some things do not change. When François came here years ago as a student to study our fast food, I suspect he said the same thing.

About the White House, de Tocqueville's traveling companion wrote, "The President of the United States occupies a palace that in Paris would be called a fine private residence." [*Laughter*] And he wrote—and I very much can relate to this—"The power of the King of France would be nil if it were modeled after the power of the President." [*Laughter*] And the King did not have to deal with the filibuster. [*Laughter*]

Now, Americans took lessons from France as well. One young American lawyer went to Paris and was deeply moved to see White and Black students studying together. And that young American was Charles Sumner, who—inspired by what he saw in France—became one of our greatest abolitionists, helped to end slavery, and is one of the reasons that all of us can be here this evening as full citizens, free and equal.

Now, it is true that we Americans have grown to love all things French: the films, the food, the wine. Especially the wine. [*Laughter*] But most of all, we love our French friends because we've stood together for our freedom for more than 200 years. Tonight I again want to pay tribute to President Hollande for the principled leadership and personal friendship and courage that he has shown on the world stage. Thank you, François.

We started this visit yesterday at Monticello. And I'd like to end where we began. Thomas Jefferson wrote: "So ask the traveled inhabitant of any nation, in what country on Earth would you rather live? Certainly, in my own, where [are] my friends, my relations, and the earliest and sweetest affections and recollections of my life." But Jefferson added, "Which would be your second choice? France." Of course.

And so I propose a toast: To our friend and partner President Hollande, to all of our friends from France who are here today, *vive la France,* God bless America, and long live the alliance between our great nations. *À votre santé!* Cheers.

[*At this point, President Obama offered a toast.*]

President Obama. Please, François. Cheers!

[*President Hollande spoke in English as follows.*]

President Hollande. Mr. President, dear Michelle, Members of the Congress and French Parliament, ladies and gentlemen: I hope that translation exists. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome that you have extended to me and my delegation. France and the United States of America are bound by ties of history: great history of French citizens such as Lafayette, who fought alongside the heroes of independence to allow your dream of freedom to prevail; the glorious history of the Americans who came to fight on French soil during the First World War and, then in June 1944, to liberate the European continent from Nazi oppression.

This afternoon it was a great moment and a great honor to award your Unknown Soldier with the insignia of the French Legion of Honor and to award medal to six glorious veterans of the Second World War. I promise we shall never forget them.

More recently, after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, France shared Americans' pain. On that frightful day, someone has warned, we were all Americans. This is the very reason why we endured together in Afghanistan.

Monsieur le Président, now I will speak French.

[*President Hollande spoke in French, and then concluded his remarks in English and French as follows.*]

President Hollande. I raise my glass in honor of the United States of America, of the President Barack Obama, Michelle: Long live the United States! *Vive la France et vive l'amitié entre la France et les États-Unis.*

[*President Hollande offered a toast. His preceding remarks were then translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

President Hollande. Our two countries share universal values, and we have feelings for one another. We love Americans, although we don't always say so. And you love the French, but you're sometimes too shy to say so. [*Laughter*] Too withdrawn. But we share the same universal values: freedom, democracy, respect for the law. These principles guide our action.

Ever since I took office at the Presidency, we have been defending them together. In Mali, the French Armed Forces were able to rely on the efficient support awarded by the U.S. soldiers and equipment. In the Central African Republic, your support has accompanied our operation aiming at restoring security in this country, torn by its actions and violence between religions.

Together, we have removed the unacceptable threat of an Iranian nuclear weapon, and we have succeeded in reaching an interim agreement. In Syria, we together removed—through resorting to the threat of force—the threat of a worsening situation, and we managed to force the regime of Bashar al-Asad to accept the destruction of his stockpiles of chemical weapons. And again, together, we are looking resolutely together for a political outcome so desperately needed.

Together, the French and the Americans also want to work for growth and to introduce new rules that will prevent financial crises and enable us to fight more efficiently against tax evasion. First results are here, and the strength and robustness of the American economy is a source of hope for all developed countries. Provided that we open up our markets and intensify our trade, we will succeed.

Together, we will also rise to the challenge of climate change. Paris will be hosting the climate change conference in 2015. It is up to us to convince our major partners to take the necessary steps before it is too late. And I know again that I can count on your commitment.

Mr. President, the relations between our two countries have reached an exceptional level of closeness and confidence, and there is one simple reason for that: We share the same vision of the world, and we show mutual respect. The United States of America and France are two great nations. What is expected of them is to keep a promise, a promise of freedom and the promise of progress, and also to keep a dream alive—that same dream made by Jefferson, Washington, Lafayette, and the French revolutionaries—a dream to change the world. By uniting our forces, by united—uniting our

talents, we will be able to keep the flame of hope alive.

I raise my glass to the President of the United States of America and to Michelle Obama. Long live the United States! Long live France!

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:48 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, President Hollande referred to Lansdale, PA, resident George A. Shenkle; Keswick, VA, resident Arthur W. Ordel, Jr.; Madison Heights, VA, resident Robert L. Sales; Vienna, VA, resident John C. Cheban; Frederick, MD, residents Henry E. Ponton, Jr., and Charles S. Toms; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

Remarks on Signing an Executive Order Establishing a Minimum Wage for Contractors

February 12, 2014

The President. Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat.

Audience member. Awesome!

The President. [*Laughter*] Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. I know you had to come here before you go buy some shovels and some salt. [*Laughter*] It sounds like we may get a little snow. But I very much appreciate everybody being here. I want to thank, first and foremost, the workers who are with me here this afternoon. [*Applause*] Hey! And I want to thank two champions for all hard-working Americans. We've got Secretary of Labor Tom Perez; he's in the house. Where is Tom? Right here. Tom is right here. I didn't know where he was. And we've got an outstanding Congressman—who's used to snow because he's from Minnesota—Congressman Keith Ellison.

Now, it's been just over 2 weeks since I delivered my State of the Union Address, and I said this year would be a year of action, and I meant it. Over the past 14 days, I've ordered an across-the-board reform of our job training programs to train folks with the skills that employers need and then match them up with good jobs that are ready to be filled right now.

I've directed the Treasury to create something we're calling MyRA, sort of like an IRA, but it's MyRA. And that's a new way for Americans to start saving for retirement. And you can start with as little as 25, 50 dollars and start building up a little bit of a nest egg and get tax benefits for doing so.

We've rallied the leaders of some of America's biggest high-tech companies to help us make sure that all of our kids have access to high-speed Internet and up-to-date technology in their classroom so that they're learning the skills that they need for the new economy.

We brought together business leaders who are committed to hiring more unemployed Americans, particularly long-term unemployed, who oftentimes are discriminated against. They're in a catch-22: They haven't had a job for a while, and then the employer is not willing to look at their résumé because they haven't had their job for a while.

So the point is, I'm eager to work with Congress whenever I can find opportunities to expand opportunity for more families. But wherever I can act on my own, without Congress, by using my pen to take executive actions or picking up the phone and rallying folks around a common cause, that's what I'm going to do.

And so that brings me to the issue we're going to talk about today. After the worst economic crisis in generations, our economy has been growing for the past 4 years. And our businesses have created 8½ million new jobs. Unemployment rate has come down. But while those at the top are doing better than ever—corporate profits have been high, stock market has been high—average wages have barely budged. So you've got too many Americans who are working harder than ever before just to get by, but they can't seem to get ahead, can't seem to make all the ends meet.

And that's been true since long before the recession hit. We've got to reverse those trends. We've got to build an economy that works for everybody, not just the fortunate few. And we've got to restore opportunity for everybody so that no matter who you are, no matter how you started out, no matter what you look like, no matter what your last name is, you can get ahead in America if you're willing to work hard and take responsibility for your life. All right?

So the opportunity agenda I've laid out is going to help us do just that. Part one of this agenda is more new jobs that pay a good wage, jobs in manufacturing and exports and energy and innovation. Part two, we've got to train the folks with the skills to fill those jobs. Part three, we've got to make sure every child gets a world-class education. And part four, we've got to make sure that the economy rewards hard work for every American.

Making hard work pay off with economic security and decent wages and benefits is what we're about here today. It means making sure women earn equal pay for equal work. It means making sure workers have the chance to save for a dignified retirement. It means access to affordable health insurance that gives you the freedom to change jobs or be your own boss and the peace of mind that it will be there for you when you get sick and you need it most.

So if you know anybody who doesn't have health insurance right now—[*laughter*]—send them to healthcare.gov. The website is working. [*Laughter*] Sign them up. You can get health care for less than your cell phone bill for a lot of folks.

But it also means that, in the wealthiest nation on Earth, nobody who works full time should have to live in poverty. Nobody. Not here in America.

Now, it was 1 year ago today—1 year ago today—that I first asked Congress to raise the Federal minimum wage, a Federal minimum wage that in real terms is worth about 20-percent less than it was when Ronald Reagan took office. Twenty-percent less, a fifth less.

So this afternoon I've invited some of the folks who would see a raise if we raised that Federal minimum wage. They happened to join me here at the White House. And like most workers in their situation, they're not teenagers—they look like teenagers, some of them are very young looking. [*Laughter*] But they're not teenagers taking on their first job. They're adults; average age is 35 years old. A majority of lower wage jobs are held by women. Many of them have children that they're supporting. These are Americans who work full time, often to support a family, and if the minimum wage had kept pace with our economic productivity, they'd already be getting paid well over $10 an hour.

Instead, the minimum wage is still just $7.25. And when Congress refuses to raise it, it loses value; because there's a little bit inflation, everything else starts costing a little bit more. Even though inflation has been pretty low, it's still costing a little bit more each year. That means each dollar isn't going as far and they've got a little bit less. So over the past year, the failure of Congress to act was the equivalent of a $200 pay cut for these folks: for a typical minimum wage worker. That's a month worth of groceries, maybe 2 months' worth of electricity. It makes a big difference for a lot of families.

Now, the good news is that in the year since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, six States went ahead and passed laws to raise theirs. [*Applause*] We appreciate that. You got more States and cities and counties that are taking steps to raise their minimum wage as we speak. And a lot of companies are doing it too, not out of charity, but because they've discovered, it's good business.

Two weeks ago, I visited a Costco store in Maryland. Now, Costco is a very profitable company. Its stock has done great. It's expanded all over the place. But their philosophy is, higher wages are a smart way to boost productivity and reduce turnover. If employees are happy and feel like the company is invested in them, then they're going to do more for the company. They're going to go above and beyond.

And when I was over at the Costco store, I was meeting folks who had started off as—at the cash register and now were in supervisory positions and had been there for 20 years. And you could see the kind of pride that they had in the company because the company cared about them. I even received a letter the next day from a woman who saw my visit on TV; she decided to apply a job for Costco. [*Laughter*] She said, let me apply for a job at Costco. They look like they do a good job.

So across the country, owners of small and large businesses are recognizing that fair wages and higher profits go hand in hand; it's good for the bottom line. And as America's chief executive, I agree. So while Congress decides what it's going to do—and I hope this year, and I'm going to work this year and urge this year that they actually pass a law—today I'm going to do what I can to help raise working Americans' wages.

So today I'm issuing an Executive order requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour—[*applause*]—$10.10 an hour.

Now, this will make a difference for folks. Right now there's a dishwasher at Randolph Air Force Base in Texas making $7.76 an hour—$7.76 an hour. There's a fast food worker at Andrews, right down the street, making $8.91 an hour. There's a laundry worker at Camp Dodge in Iowa making $9.03 an hour. Once I sign this order, starting next year, as their contracts come up, each of them and many of their fellow coworkers are going to get a raise. And by the way, that includes folks who get paid in tips. They'll get a raise too. So a tip wage has gone up even slower than the regular minimum wage.

So just as it's good for companies across the country, this will be good for America's bottom line, for contractors and for taxpayers. The opponents of the minimum wage have been using the same arguments for years, and time and again, they've been proven wrong. Raising the minimum wage is good for business, and it's good for workers, and it's good for the economy. Put some more money in these folks' pockets, that means they've got some money to go shop, which in turn means the business has more customers, which means they may hire more workers and make more of a profit.

And let's not forget, not only is it good for the economy, it's the right thing to do. There's a simple moral principle at stake: If you take responsibility and you work as hard as these folks work, if you work full time, you shouldn't be living in poverty. Not in America. We believe that.

And this Executive order will cover Americans with disabilities, because this principle doesn't just apply to some of us, it applies to all of us.

So I'm going to keep doing whatever I can to raise working Americans' wages. And I would ask any business leader out there, any Governor, any mayor, any local leader listening, do what you can to raise your employees' wages, to work to raise the wages of citizens in your jurisdiction. They'll support these efforts. A majority of Americans—not just Democrats, not just Independents, but Republicans too—support raising the minimum wage. It's the right thing to do. So that's something Congress should keep in mind this year.

There's a bill right now in front of both the House and the Senate that would boost America's minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, just like I'm doing with this executive action. It's easy to remember: 10–10. Ten-ten. Let's get that done. Raise the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 wouldn't just raise wages for minimum wage workers, its effect would lift wages for about 28 million Americans. It would lift millions of Americans out of poverty immediately. It would help millions more work their way out of poverty, without requiring a single dollar in new taxes or spending. It's the right thing to do.

Just last month, 600 economists, including 7 Nobel Prize winners, wrote the leaders of Houses of Congress to remind them that the bill before Congress would have little or no negative effect on hiring, on jobs. So it's not going to depress the economy. It will boost the economy.

[*At this point, a baby in the audience made a sound resembling "Yes!"*]

The President. Yes! [*Laughter*] It will give more businesses more customers with more money to spend. It will grow the economy for everybody. So—yeah! [*Laughter*] He's excited about it. [*Laughter*]

So Members of Congress have a pretty clear choice to make right now: Raise our workers' wages, grow our economy, or let wages stagnate further and give workers what amounts to another pay cut this year. Restore unemployment insurance for Americans still looking for that job or expose them further to hardship. Members of Congress, you can help people make progress in their own lives, or you can hinder that progress.

And every American deserves to know where your elected representative stands on this issue. So ask your Senator, ask your Representative in the House, "Do you support raising the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 an hour?" If they say yes, tell them, "Good job." [*Laughter*] They don't hear that that often, so—[*laughter*]—give them a pat on the back, give them a hug, let them know, "Way to go." That's the right thing to do. If they say no, be polite; I mean, don't just yell at them, but say, "Well, why not?" Ask them to reconsider siding with an overwhelming majority of Americans. Encourage them to say yes. Give America a raise.

So I'm about to sign this Executive order. When you hear me talking about my pen and my phone to make a difference for middle class Americans and those working to get into the middle class, this is exactly what I mean. I'm going to do what I can. Congress should do what it needs to do. I will not give up on this fight, no matter how long it takes. America deserves a raise. Working families deserve to know some more economic security in their own lives.

We've got to create new jobs, strengthen the middle class, build new ladders of opportunity for folks working their way into the middle class, just like these folks are doing right here. There are millions of Americans who could just use a little bit of boost, millions of Americans outside of Washington who are tired of the old, stale political arguments or tired of folks just looking out for people who can afford big lobbyists and big campaign contributions. There are folks out there who want to see us restore an economy that works for everybody and get back to our founding vision of opportunity for all.

So I know you guys will work with me. But go out there and organize some more. Thank you, everybody. Let's give Americans a raise right now. I'm going to sign this.

[*The President signed the Executive order.*]

The President. All right, it's done. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Release of the "Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity" by the National Institute of Standards and Technology

February 12, 2014

Cyber threats pose one [of][*] the gravest national security dangers that the United States faces. To better defend our Nation against this systemic challenge, 1 year ago, I signed an Executive order directing the administration to take steps to improve information-sharing with the private sector, raise the level of cybersecurity across our critical

[*] White House correction.

infrastructure, and enhance privacy and civil liberties.

Since then, the National Institute of Standards and Technology has worked with the private sector to develop a Cybersecurity Framework that highlights best practices and globally recognized standards so that companies across our economy can better manage cyber risk to our critical infrastructure. Today I was pleased to receive the Cybersecurity Framework, which reflects the good work of hundreds of companies, multiple Federal agencies, and contributors from around the world. This voluntary Framework is a great example of how the private sector and Government can and should work together to meet this shared challenge.

While I believe today's Framework marks a turning point, it's clear that much more work needs to be done to enhance our cybersecurity. America's economic prosperity, national security, and our individual liberties depend on our commitment to securing cyberspace and maintaining an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable Internet. Our critical infrastructure continues to be at risk from threats in cyberspace, and our economy is harmed by the theft of our intellectual property. Although the threats are serious and they constantly evolve, I believe that if we address them effectively, we can ensure that the Internet remains an engine for economic growth and a platform for the free exchange of ideas.

I again urge Congress to move forward on cybersecurity legislation that both protects our Nation and our privacy and civil liberties. Meanwhile, my administration will continue to take action, under existing authorities, to protect our Nation from this threat.

NOTE: The statement referred to Executive Order 13636.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Legislation Increasing the Public Debt Limit

February 12, 2014

I'm pleased that Republicans and Democrats in Congress have come together to pay for what they've already spent and remove the threat of default from our economy once and for all. The full faith and credit of the United States is too important to use as leverage or a tool for extortion. Hopefully, this puts an end to politics by brinksmanship and allows us to move forward to do more to create good jobs and strengthen the economy. Instead of wasting time creating new crises, Congress should be focused on creating new jobs and opportunities. That's what the American people deserve from their representatives in Washington, and that's what they should get.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 540.

Remarks at the House Democratic Issues Conference in Cambridge, Maryland

February 14, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Everybody, sit down. Sit down. Well, it is good to see you. Joe, thank you for the wonderful introduction. Let me be the first to say, Happy Valentine's Day to our fearless leader, Nancy Pelosi. I mean, Paul will, hopefully, get you more than just a thank you.

To Steny, to Jim, Xavier; Steve Israel, who is doing an extraordinary job under very difficult circumstances; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who is putting in more miles than just about anybody I know; and all of you: It's great to see you.

We just saw each other at the White House fairly recently, so I'm not going to give a long speech here. I want to spend most of my time answering some more questions. But let me

just make a couple observations since we saw each other. First of all, I stated in our State of the Union that the single most important thing we have to do—not just as a party, but as a country—is make sure that there's opportunity for every single person; that we are focused every single day in this town—or in Washington—on making sure that if you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to take responsibility, that you can get ahead. It doesn't matter where you live, what circumstances you were born into, what you look like, who you love, you should be able to make it here in America.

And as I said at the State of the Union, I want to work with Congress to make that happen, but I'm not going to wait, because there's too much to do. And America does not believe in standing still. America insists on moving forward.

We laid out some very specific ways that we can move the country forward, breaking them down into a few categories: number one, creating more good jobs that pay good wages; number two, making sure that folks are trained to fill those good jobs; number three, making sure that our kids have the best education in the world; and number four, making sure that hard work pays off, that people aren't poor if they're working full time, that they have some semblance of retirement security, that they can count on health care if, heaven forbid, something happens to them.

And already, just in the last couple of weeks, we've put forward a range of executive actions that are going to make a difference. So yesterday, for example, I had a chance to be with a group of minimum wage workers for Federal contractors. These are folks who are washing dishes or cleaning clothes on our Armed—our military bases, our facilities, and sometimes, the debates on Capitol Hill get so abstract, and to be next to folks—average age, by the way, 35. These aren't teenagers, these are folks who are looking after families and trying to raise kids. And to see what it would mean to them for us to have a Federal minimum wage of $10.10 an hour and how much relief that would give them and how committed they were to the American Dream and getting ahead and just hoping that somebody was standing up for them, it reminded me of why I'm a Democrat. And it reminded me of why I'm so proud of this caucus, because you're standing up on behalf of them.

And so we signed the Executive order. These folks are going to get a raise. And what I said yesterday is that now it's time for Congress to act, because America deserves a raise. I pointed out yesterday, as I pointed out at the State of the Union, that the majority of low-wage workers are women, which is why we're going to keep on pushing to make sure that we have equal pay for equal work and we have sensible family policies. Because as I said at the State of the Union, when women succeed, America succeeds. I still believe that.

We've traveled to manufacturing plants up in Wisconsin to talk about how we can continue to accelerate advanced manufacturing and technology in this country. And we've got some great possibilities to create hubs that keep us on the cutting edge. We've signed Executive orders to advance the kind of job training that is going to help people get trained for the jobs that actually exist and link up businesses with our community colleges. We've already, through executive action, set up a new retirement account, MyRA, that allows folks to get a starter retirement, because a whole lot of people don't have 401(k)s to save.

Across the board, we're moving. But as I said at the State of the Union, and I want to repeat today, we can get a whole lot more done if we've got Congress working with us. And this caucus has shown time and time again under the most difficult circumstances the kind of courage and unity and discipline that has made me very, very proud.

And I was just talking to Nancy before I came out here. The fact that we are no longer going to see, I believe, anybody try to hold our Government hostage and threaten the full faith and credit of the United States of America in order to contract policy concessions, the fact that we were able to pass a clean debt limit is just one example of why, when you guys are unified, you guys stick together, this country is better off. And I could not be more thankful

and more appreciative and prouder of what you're doing.

Just a couple of more points. Number one, you've seen reports over the last couple of days that we actually slightly exceeded our targets for ACA signups and enrollments this past month, in the month of January. We now have well over 3½ million people who have signed up and are getting insurance through the marketplaces for the first time. That does not count the close to 7 million folks who have signed up for Medicaid because of the law that you passed or the 3 million young people who are staying on their parents' plans. We're starting to see data already that the uninsured rate is coming down. We are going to keep on pushing on this to make sure that here in America, everybody can enjoy the kind of financial security and peace of mind that good quality health insurance provides.

And I just want to say thank you for all of you hanging in there tough on an issue that I think, 10 years from now, 5 years from now, we're going to look back and say this was a monumental achievement that could not have happened had it not been for this caucus.

And finally, there are some big things that we have to do that I cannot do through executive action, where we have to get Congress and where the American people are on our side. A Federal minimum wage law is one of them. Another, though, is making sure that we've got a smart immigration policy in this country that grows our economy, gets people out of the shadows, makes sure that our businesses are thriving. That's got to be a top priority. We're going to have to keep on working on that.

And I believe, frankly, that there are folks on the other side of the aisle who genuinely want to see this done, but they're worried, and they're scared about the political blowback. And look, everybody here is an elected official, and we can all appreciate the maneuverings that take place, particularly in an election year. But when it comes to immigration reform, we have to remind ourselves that there are people behind the statistics, that there are lives that are being impacted, that punting and putting things off for another year, another 2 years, another 3 years, it hurts people. It hurts our economy. It hurts families.

And part of what I'd like to think makes us Democrats is not simply some abstract ideological set of beliefs, but the fact that we're reminded every single day that we're here to help a whole bunch of folks out there—our neighbors, our friends, our communities—who are struggling still and need our help. And they're counting on us. The good thing is, they've got some outstanding Members of Congress who are willing to fight for them regardless of the political cost, starting with your leader Nancy Pelosi.

I'm grateful for you. And I'm looking forward to making sure that this year we keep on making progress even if we continue to get a little resistance from the other side. The American people know that we could be breaking out if Washington gets its act together, and it's important for us to lead that process. All right?

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Spa and Marina. In his remarks, he referred to Reps. Joseph Crowley, Steny H. Hoyer, James E. Clyburn, and Xavier Becerra; and Paul F. Pelosi, Sr., husband of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. He also referred to Executive Order 13658, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a Roundtable Discussion on Drought Relief Efforts and Water Management Policy in Firebaugh, California
February 14, 2014

I wanted to come here basically to listen. We're all equally dependent upon California producers for so many of products in our lives. As you know, Michelle wants us to use more of your products, not less. In fact, I think her "Let's Move!" initiative has met with some of

the producers to talk about how we can get our kids eating more produce, more nuts, and more healthy foods. And because of the huge economic impact of what you do not just on California, but the Nation overall, there is a national concern around the drought that is facing California.

Now, as I'm sure Tom has shared with you and, I think, many of you know firsthand, we've been monitoring this for quite some time, and a whole host of our agencies have been coming in to interact with all of you and find ways that we can provide some immediate relief. But the truth of the matter is, is that this is going to be a very challenging situation this year, and frankly, the trend lines are such where it's going to be a challenging situation for some time to come.

And as we were flying over those beautiful mountains of yours that are the source of traditionally so much water in this area and despite the rain and snow that had come just over the last few days, it was still looking fairly bare; it gives you a sense that the baseline of water throughout the West, not just California, is going to be probably lower than what we've been accustomed to over the last hundred years. And that means we're going to have to make some decisions about how we conserve better, how we allocate water better, how we recycle water better, and how we cooperate more effectively not just in this State, but throughout the region and around the country.

Now, water politics in California traditionally, I know, has been pretty heated—[*laughter*]—and I told the Governor I'm not going to wade into this, because I want to get out of here alive on Valentine's Day. [*Laughter*] So my goal today—and I think, my administration's goal generally—is to try to facilitate and work with a whole range of stakeholders at the local levels and see how we can find common ground that points us in the new direction moving forward.

But I will say this: I think there's a tendency, historically, to think of water as a zero-sum game, where either the agricultural interests are getting it or urban areas are getting it; it's North, it's South. Given what we anticipate to be a significant reduction in the overall amount of water, we're going to have to figure out how to play a different game. And if the politics are structured in just such a way where everybody is fighting each other and trying to get as much as they can, my suspicion is, is that we're going to not make much progress, particularly because Jim Costa told me, if you want to guarantee yourself a job in California, become a water rights lawyer. [*Laughter*]

So what we can't afford, I think, is just years of litigation and no real action. And our hope is, is that we can convene a conversation that helps us move forward.

So I'm glad to be here. Even though I'm only going to be here for a little over an hour, what I am at the outset making a commitment to all of you is, is that we are going to stay on top of this, because it has national implications not only for our economy, but we're also going to have to make sure that we weave in this issue of water in the West with the broader issues of climate change that are having an impact all across the country in different ways. There's a connection between drought in the West and hurricanes along the Atlantic and coastal erosion. And what this all means is we're going to have to start rethinking our infrastructure and what are the projects that 50 years from now, 100 years from now, our children and grandchildren are going to be able to say, we had the foresight to deal with these problems in a serious way.

And that's not going to be happening overnight. We'll try to get immediate relief right now, but we also have to have this larger conversation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. at a San Luis Water District facility. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack; and Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., of California.

Remarks in Firebaugh
February 14, 2014

Well, first of all, I want to thank Joe and Maria Del Bosque and their beautiful daughters for showing Governor Brown and me around their farm.

Joe has got an incredible story. The son of a migrant farmworker, farm work is how he put himself through college. He's been a farmer for most of his life. He started by going around to other folks' land and saying, I'll grow some cantaloupes for you and—as long as you pay me for what we produce, and over the years, was able to develop this amazing business and not only start growing cantaloupes, but almonds and cherries and all kinds of other good stuff.

He's—there are three things that make farming work in California, according to Joe: soil, water, and people. And in the little free time they have, Joe and Maria work to improve the health and safety of farmworkers. There are a lot of people who are dependent on him year round and a lot of people who work seasonally with Joe and Maria, and their livelihoods depend on the functioning of these farms.

But today we're here to talk about the resource that's keeping more and more California farmers and families up at night, and that is water or the lack of it.

As anybody in this State could tell you, California is living through some of its driest years in a century. Right now almost 99 percent of California is drier than normal, and the winter snowpack that provides much of your water far into the summer is much smaller than normal. And we could see that as we were flying in. Jim and Barbara and Dianne and I were flying over the mountain ranges and could see, even though there was a little bit of snow that just came in the last couple of days, that it's nothing like it is normally.

Now, while drought in regions outside the West is expected to be less severe than in other years, California is our biggest economy, California is our biggest agricultural producer, so what happens here matters to every working American, right down to the cost of food that you put on your table.

And that's why, last month, Governor Brown declared a state of emergency, directing State officials to prepare for drought conditions. And together, our administrations launched a coordinated response. Secretary Vilsack, who is here today, declared 27 counties as primary natural disaster areas, making farmers and ranchers eligible for emergency loans. And over the past 2 weeks, his team at USDA and Mike Connor's team at the Interior Department have released new funds for conservation and irrigation, announced investments to upgrade water infrastructure, and partnered with California to stretch the water supply as much as possible.

Today I want to announce new actions that we can take together to help these hard-working folks. First, we're accelerating a hundred million dollars of funds from the farm bill that I signed last week to help ranchers. For example, if their fields have dried up, this is going to help them feed their livestock. Second, last week we announced $20 million to help hard-hit communities, and today we're announcing up to $15 million more for California and other States that are in extreme drought. Third, I'm directing the Interior Department to use its existing authorities, where appropriate, to give water contractors flexibility to meet their obligations. And fourth, I'm directing all Federal facilities in California to take immediate steps to curb their water use, including a moratorium on water usage for new, nonessential landscaping projects.

A bipartisan bill written by your outstanding Senators, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, as well as your own outstanding Representative and almond farmer, Jim Costa, includes similar ideas. And I hope that Congress considers the legislation that they have crafted soon, work through some of the concerns that have been expressed. Let's make sure that we're getting some short-term relief to folks, but also

long-term certainty for people who are going to be harmed by this drought.

Now, these actions will help, but they're just the first step. We have to be clear: A changing climate means that weather-related disasters like droughts, wildfires, storms, floods are potentially going to be costlier and they're going to be harsher. Droughts have obviously been a part of life out here west—in the West since before any of us were around, and water politics in California have always been complicated, but scientific evidence shows that a changing climate is going to make them more intense.

Scientists will debate whether a particular storm or drought reflects patterns of climate change. But one thing that is undeniable is that changing temperatures influence drought in at least three ways. Number one, more rain falls in extreme downpours, so more water is lost to runoff than captured for use. Number two, more precipitation in the mountains falls as rain rather than snow, so rivers run dry earlier in the year. Number three, soil and reservoirs lose more water to evaporation year round.

What does all this mean? Unless and until we do more to combat carbon pollution that causes climate change, this trend is going to get worse. And the hard truth is, even if we do take action on climate change, carbon pollution has built up in our atmosphere for decades. The planet is slowly going to keep warming for a long time to come. So we're going to have to stop looking at these disasters as something to wait for; we've got to start looking at these disasters as something to prepare for, to anticipate, to start building new infrastructure, to start having new plans, to recalibrate the baseline that we're working off of.

And everybody, from farmers to industry, to residential areas, to the north of California and the south of California and everyplace in between, as well as the entire Western region are going to have to start rethinking how we approach water for decades to come.

And as I said when I was meeting with the town hall group, we can't think of this simply as a zero-sum game. It can't just be a matter of, there's going to be less and less water so I'm going to grab more and more of a shrinking share of water. Instead, what we have to do is all come together and figure out how we all are going to make sure that agricultural needs, urban needs, industrial needs, environmental and conservation concerns are all addressed. And that's going to be a big project, but it's one that I'm confident we can do.

Part of the Climate Action Plan that I put forward last summer is designed to protect critical sectors of our economy and prepare the United States for the effects of climate change that we're just not going to be able to avoid. So last week, for example, the USDA announced seven new climate hubs to help farmers and ranchers adapt their operations to a changing climate, one of which will be at UC Davis, focused on resilience for California's specialty crops.

The budget I sent to Congress—the budget that I send to Congress next month will include $1 billion in new funding for new technologies to help communities prepare for a changing climate, set up incentives to build smarter, more resilient infrastructure. And finally, my administration will work with tech innovators and launch new challenges under our Climate Data Initiative, focused initially on rising sea levels and their impacts on the coasts, but ultimately focused on how all these changes in weather patterns are going to have an impact up and down the United States—not just on the coast, but inland as well—and how do we start preparing for that. And that has to be work that we do together. This cannot be a partisan endeavor.

One of the great things about that town hall that I just came out of: Not everybody agreed on anything—[*laughter*]—except people did agree that we can't keep on doing business as usual. That's what people did understand: that there has to be a sense of urgency about this.

And issues like the Federal Government helping States to build infrastructure to adapt and ensure economic development and that families and workers are able to prosper, there's nothing new about that. We just saw a photograph of President Kennedy and current Governor Brown's dad building some of the

aquifers that have been so important to the economy of this State for decades. If we were able to do that then, we should be able to do it now. It's just a matter of us making sure that we're not putting politics ahead of trying to get things working.

Our work with Governor Brown and his administration is going to continue. Californians have all had to come together and already make sacrifices, big and small, to help your neighbors and your State get through this. The good news is, California is always on the cutting edge. Already, you use water far more efficiently than you did decades ago. You do it smarter. Joe was explaining just how this drip irrigation that you see in this region has made many of these farms much more efficient when it comes to water utilization. And so we know that we can innovate and meet this challenge, but we've got to start now. We can't wait.

So I want to make sure that every Californian knows—whether you're NorCals, SoCal, here in the Central Valley—your country is going to be there for you when you need it this year. But we're going to have to all work together in the years to come to make sure that we address the challenge and leave this incredible land embodied to our children and our grandchildren in at least as good shape as we found it.

So thank you very much, everybody, for the great work that you guys do. And I've already told the Governor as well as all your outstanding representatives here that our administration is going to stay on this and we are prepared to cooperate with local, State officials throughout. And that's not just in California, because we're going to see some similar problems in places like Colorado, Nevada, some of the neighboring Western States, and so part of the conversation is also going to have to be a regional conversation.

But this is something that I'm very committed to. We're going to make sure to get it done, working together. Thank you so much, everybody.

Audience members. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:55 p.m. at Del Bosque Farms, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to Joe L. Del Bosque, Jr., president, and Maria G. Del Bosque, vice president, Del Bosque Farms, Inc.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With King Abdullah II of Jordan in Rancho Mirage, California

February 14, 2014

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure to welcome my good friend and partner, King Abdullah, back to the United States. And it's wonderful to be able to host him here at beautiful Sunnylands. I want to thank the Annenberg group that has maintained this wonderful facility and made it available to us.

This gives me an opportunity to have an extensive consultation with His Majesty in a less formal setting. But I think it's fair to say that we have very few friends, partners, and allies around the world that have been as steadfast and reliable as His Majesty King Abdullah, as well as the people of Jordan. In a region that obviously is going through enormous changes, the friendship between our peoples has been a constant.

And most recently, we are now partnering because Jordan just took its seat on the Security Council and is working actively with us on a whole range of international issues. I'm going to be very interested in hearing more from His Majesty about the reforms that he has initiated both politically and economically, because his top priority obviously is the prosperity of his people and providing more opportunity for the population there.

We've been very impressed with the fact that, although oftentimes difficult and although it meets resistance sometimes, His

Majesty has been able to move forward with the reforms that meet the IMF program that has been put together. And in part because of these successes, I want to announce today that we will be providing the Kingdom of Jordan a $1 billion loan guarantee fund that will help Jordan access the international capital markets, as well as extend for 5 years the memorandum of understanding that we have with the Kingdom of Jordan that allows that country to pursue the kind of development that will not only help the people of Jordan, but help the region as a whole.

Our cooperation on a whole host of issues is extensive. We're going to be talking a lot about the political changes that are taking place in the region. Obviously, a central focus will be the situation in Syria. And the people of Jordan have been very generous in absorbing hundreds of thousands of displaced persons from that war-ravaged country. It puts a great strain on the resources of Jordan, and it's very important for us to make sure that we're supportive of the Kingdom in accommodating all these refugees.

At the same time, both of us recognize that we can't just treat the symptoms. We'll be working aggressively at the United Nations level and at the regional level to try to provide basic humanitarian assistance and access to people who are suffering tremendously as a consequence of the war inside of Syria. But we're also going to have to solve the underlying problem: a regime led by Bashar al-Asad that has shown very little regard for the well-being of his people, has attacked civilians in ruthless ways. We are going to need a political transition in that region.

And we're going to continue to strategize on how we can effectively change the calculus inside the country so that we can have a Syria that is intact, that is respectful of all groups, that ends the killing, and that allows for a representative government that can provide peace and prosperity for everybody there.

We don't expect to solve this any time in the short term, so there are going to be some immediate steps that we have to take to help the humanitarian situation there. There will be some intermediate steps that we can take to apply more pressure to the Asad regime, and we're going to be continuing to work with all the parties concerned to try to move forward on a diplomatic solution.

But in all these issues, and in the critical issue of trying to bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinians—an issue that His Majesty, and his father before him, had enormous stake in and investment in and has been a very capable and trustworthy partner—on all these issues, we are very grateful for the work that we're able to do together. And I look forward to what I'm sure is going to be an illuminating and constructive conversation.

So thank you, Your Majesty. And welcome.

King Abdullah. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm delighted and pleased on behalf of myself and the Jordanian people. I'm really, really appreciative of the time that you're giving us today. And on behalf of all of us, thank you for the support of yourself, of your administration, of the American people, of Congress, with the outstanding support that you've shown Jordan with all the changes that we're facing. With all of the challenges that are ahead of us, I will continue our comprehensive reform program. We're not using the challenges in our region as an excuse to waver, and I'm looking forward to discussing our reform process with you this evening.

As you mentioned, we are going to be the members of the U.N. Security Council for the next 2 years. There are many challenges in our region and beyond, and I look forward to working with the United States and the international community on how we can best bring peace and prosperity not only to the region, but beyond.

Sir, obviously, we'd like to commend the role that the United States has been playing in bringing Israelis and Palestinians closer together. And obviously, your role—the leadership that the United States has shown—has been critical and very much admired. And the diligence of the way that the United States has been able to bring both partners much closer together over the past several months has really given me a lot of hope. And so I would just

like to commend the dramatic role of the United States in that regard.

As you're very well aware, we're obviously a stakeholder in all final status negotiations, and therefore, our national interests in these issues are of paramount importance. But I am cautiously optimistic, even with the major challenges, that America has been really working tirelessly to really improve the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Obviously, as you mentioned, sir, the main challenge that we have is, how do we bring a political, comprehensive solution to the Syrian people? Our major concern in the area is the rise of extremism in Syria, the sectarian violence, and if we don't find a solution, the spillover in the region and the effect that will have. But again, I'm sure that our views are similar, and we will be working very closely with you, sir, and our Western friends in trying to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people as quickly as possible.

Sir, you've mentioned your very generous support by yourself and the American people of the challenges that Jordan faces. Jordan is a resilient country. We see ourselves as an oasis of stability to our neighbors. And you have mentioned that the challenges that we face with the immense pressure of Syrian refugees and what it does to the host nation from a humanitarian point of view. And the United States has been beyond the call of duty in its support for us. And I just wanted to mention, again in front of you, how grateful I am and the people of Jordan for that outstanding support.

We do hope that the rest of the international community also steps up and catches up in the support not only for the Syrian refugees, but also the impact it has on Jordanians and Jordanian infrastructure, as well as looking at mechanisms of how we can push humanitarian supplies into Syria.

So we have a lot to talk about, sir, today, but I am very grateful on behalf of all of us for this time that you're giving us and the tremendous support that you've shown our people. Thank you.

President Obama. All right. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 p.m. at the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands. In his remarks, he referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

The President's Weekly Address
February 15, 2014

Hi, everybody. In this year of action, I said I'd do everything in my power to expand opportunity for more Americans. And this week, I took action to lift more workers' wages by requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. These are workers who serve our troops' meals, wash their dishes, care for our veterans, Americans who work hard and will get a raise as these contracts come up. This will be good for contractors, for taxpayers, and for America's bottom line.

We know why this is important. Our economy has been growing for 4 years. Our businesses have created 8½ million new jobs. But while those at the top are doing better than ever, average wages have barely budged. Too many Americans are working harder than ever just to get by, let alone get ahead. And that's been true since long before the recession hit.

That's why we've got to build an economy that works for everybody, not just a fortunate few. We've got to restore opportunity for all, the notion that no matter who you are or how you started out, with hard work and responsibility, you can get ahead in America.

The opportunity agenda I've laid out is built on more new jobs that pay good wages, better training for folks to fill those jobs, a smarter education for our kids, and making sure honest work is rewarded. And the action I took this week will reward hard work for more Americans.

But to finish the job, Congress needs to act. In the year since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, six States have passed laws

to raise theirs. More States, cities, counties, and companies are taking steps to join them. An overwhelming majority of Americans support raising a minimum wage that's worth about 20-percent less than when Ronald Reagan took office.

Right now there's a bill in Congress that would boost America's minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. That's easy to remember: 10–10. And remember, the average worker who would get a raise if Congress acts is about 35 years old. Most low-wage jobs are held by women. And raising the minimum wage wouldn't just raise their wages, its effect would lift wages for about 28 million Americans. It would lift millions of Americans out of poverty and help millions more work their way out of poverty, without requiring a single dollar in new taxes or spending. It will give more businesses more customers with more money to spend, and that means growing the economy for everyone.

You deserve to know where the people who represent you stand on this issue. If they don't support raising the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, ask them, why not? The opponents of raising folks' wages have deployed the same old arguments for years, and time and again, they've been proven wrong. Let's prove them wrong again and give America a raise. Let's make opportunity easier to come by for every American who's willing to work for it.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:50 p.m. on February 13 in the State Dining Room at the White House for broadcast on February 15. In the address, the President referred to Executive Order 13658, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 14, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on February 15.

Statement on the Ugandan Parliament's Passage of Legislation Criminalizing Homosexuality
February 16, 2014

As a country and a people, the United States has consistently stood for the protection of fundamental freedoms and universal human rights. We believe that people everywhere should be treated equally, with dignity, and respect, and that they should have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential, no matter who they are or whom they love.

That is why I am so deeply disappointed that Uganda will shortly enact legislation that would criminalize homosexuality. The Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda, once law, will be more than an affront and a danger to the gay community in Uganda. It will be a step backward for all Ugandans and reflect poorly on Uganda's commitment to protecting the human rights of its people. It also will mark a serious setback for all those around the world who share a commitment to freedom, justice, and equal rights.

As we have conveyed to President Museveni, enacting this legislation will complicate our valued relationship with Uganda. At a time when, tragically, we are seeing an increase in reports of violence and harassment targeting members of the LGBT community from Russia to Nigeria, I salute all those in Uganda and around the world who remain committed to respecting the human rights and fundamental human dignity of all persons.

Remarks at the Safeway Distribution Center in Upper Marlboro, Maryland
February 18, 2014

The President. Well, good morning, everybody.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. It is good to be here. And I want to thank Jack Jacobs and all the folks at

Safeway for having us here today at this busy distribution center, where delivery trucks get everything from Doritos to diapers where they need to go. And by the way, I have a little soft spot for Safeway in my heart, because some of you know I went to high school in Hawaii and I was living with my grandparents, and our main grocery store was Safeway. It was right down the way. And so my grandmother would send me out to go shopping at Safeway, and everybody there always treated me very well. So I very much appreciate the good work you guys do.

And I want to thank all the workers and businesspeople and labor leaders and environmental leaders who are here today as we take another big step to grow our economy and reduce America's dependence on foreign oil.

Now, in my State of the Union Address, I said that this would be a year of action, and I meant it. So over the past 3 weeks, I've acted to require Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour, because we believe in a higher minimum wage. I've ordered an across-the-board reform of job training programs so we can train workers with the skills that employers actually need and match them to the good jobs that are out there right now needing to be filled. I directed the Treasury Secretary to create something we're calling a MyRA. It's a new way to help working Americans start saving for retirement. And we've brought together business leaders who've committed to helping more unemployed Americans find work, no matter how long they've been looking.

So the point is, I'm eager to work with Congress wherever I can, but whenever I can act on my own to expand opportunity for more Americans and help build our middle class, I'm going to do that.

And all of you, I think, understand that although the economy has been doing better, we've spent the past 5 years fighting our way back from the worst recession of our lifetimes. Now, the economy is growing. Our businesses have created over 8½ million new jobs over the past 4 years. The unemployment rate is actually the lowest it's been in over 5 years. But the trends, the long-term trends, that have hurt middle class families for decades have continued: folks at the top doing better than ever before; average wages and incomes have barely budged. Too many Americans are working harder than ever just to keep up.

So our job is to not only get the economy growing, but also to reverse these trends and make sure that everybody can succeed. We've got to build an economy that works for everybody, not just the fortunate few. Opportunity for all, that's the essence of America. No matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter how you start out, if you're willing to work hard and take responsibility, you can succeed.

So I've laid out an opportunity agenda to help us do that. Part one is create more new jobs that pay good wages, jobs in manufacturing, energy, exports, innovation. Part two, we've got to train folks with the skills they need to fill those jobs. Part three, we've got to guarantee every child access to a world-class education. Part four is making sure that the economy rewards hard work with equal pay for equal work and wages you can live on, savings you can retire on, health insurance you can count on that's there for when you need it.

Now, there are very few factors that are helping grow our economy more, bringing more good jobs back to America than our commitment to American manufacturing and American energy. And that's why we're here today.

Five years ago, we set out to break our dependence on foreign oil. And today, America is closer to energy independence than we've been in decades. For the first time in nearly 20 years, America produces more oil here at home than we buy from other countries. Our levels of dangerous carbon pollution that contributes to climate change has actually gone down even as our production has gone up. And one of the reasons why is because we dedicated ourselves to manufacturing new cars and new trucks that go farther on a gallon of gas. And that saves families money, it cuts down harmful pollution, and it creates new advances in American technology.

So for decades, the fuel efficiency standards of our cars and trucks was stuck in neutral even as other kinds of technology leapt forward. And that left families and businesses and our economy vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices. Every time oil prices shot up, the economy got hurt. Our automakers were in danger of being left in the dust by foreign automakers. Carbon pollution was going unchecked, which was having severe impacts on our weather.

And that's why, after taking office, my administration worked with automakers, autoworkers, environmental advocates, and States across the country, and we put in—we set in motion the first-ever national policy aimed at both increasing gas mileage and decreasing greenhouse gas pollution for all new cars and trucks sold in the United States. And as our automakers retooled and prepared to start making the world's best cars again, we aimed to raise fuel economy standards to 35.5 miles per gallon for a new vehicle by 2016.

Audience member. Wow!

The President. Yeah, wow. [*Laughter*]

That was an increase of more than 8 miles per gallon over what cars had averaged at the time. And what we were clear about was, if you set a rule, if you set a clear goal, we would give our companies the certainty that they needed to innovate and outbuild the rest of the world. They could figure it out if they had a goal that they were trying to reach. And thanks to their ingenuity and hard work, we're going to meet that goal.

Two years later, we've already seen enormous progress, and we're building on that progress by setting an even more ambitious target: We're going to double the distance our cars and light trucks can go on a gallon of gas by 2025. We're going to double it. And that means—[*applause*]—that's big news. Because what it means is, you've got to fill up every 2 weeks instead of every week, and that saves the typical family more than $8,000 at the pump over time. I'm assuming you can use $8,000—[*laughter*]—that you're not paying at the gas station. And in the process, it cuts American oil consumption by 12 billion barrels.

So we let the automakers decide how they were going to do it. We set the goal, and we said go figure it out. And they invested in innovative and cost-effective technologies. And some are already making cars that beat the target of nearly 55 miles per gallon. They've got plug-in hybrids. They've got electric vehicles. They're taking advantage of the investments that the Recovery Act made and American advances in battery technology. So cars are getting better, and they're getting more fuel efficient all the time.

And for anybody who said this couldn't be done or that it would hurt the American auto industry, the American auto industry sold more cars last year than any time since 2007. And since we stepped in to help our automakers retool—[*applause*]—since we stepped in to help the automakers retool, the American auto industry has created almost 425,000 new jobs.

So we raised fuel efficiency, helped consumers, helped improve air quality, and we're making better cars than ever, and the automakers are hiring folks again for good jobs all across the country. More plants are running at full capacity—some are even running three shifts, 24 hours a day—churning out some of the most high-tech, fuel-efficient, high-performance cars in the world.

And that's a story of American ingenuity, American grit, and everybody has a right to be proud of it. But today we're taking the next step.

Heavy-duty trucks account for just 4 percent of all the vehicles on the highway. I know when you're driving sometimes, it feels like it's more—[*laughter*]—but they're only 4 percent of all the vehicles. But they're responsible for about 20 percent of carbon pollution in the transportation sector. So trucks like these are responsible for about 20 percent of our on-road fuel consumption. And because they haul about 70 percent of all domestic freight—70 percent of the stuff we use, everything from flat-screen TVs to diapers, to produce, to you name it—every mile that we gain in fuel efficiency is worth thousands of dollars of savings every year.

So that's why we're investing in research to get more fuel economy gains. And thanks to a partnership between industry and my administration, the truck behind me was able to achieve a 75-percent improvement in fuel economy over the last year—75 percent. That's why I call this Super Truck. [*Laughter*] It's impressive, this one right here as well. I mean, these are—first of all, they're really big. [*Laughter*] But you can see how they're—how they've redesigned the truck in order for us to save fuel economy.

And improving gas mileage for these trucks are going to drive down our oil imports even further. That reduces carbon pollution even more, cuts down on businesses' fuel costs, which should pay off in lower prices for consumers. So it's not just a win-win, it's a win-win-win. You've got three wins. [*Laughter*]

In 2011, we set new standards for medium- and heavy-duty trucks to take effect this year and last until 2018. Three weeks ago, in my State of the Union Address, I said we'd build on that success. Today I'm directing the Secretary of Transportation, Anthony Foxx, who is right here, former mayor of Charlotte, and Gina McCarthy, the Administrator of the EPA—two outstanding public servants—their charge, their goal, is to develop fuel economy standards for heavy-duty trucks that will take us well into the next decade, just like our cars. And they're going to partner with manufacturers and autoworkers and States and other stakeholders, truckers, to come up with a proposal by March of next year, and they'll complete the rule a year after that.

And businesses that buy these types of trucks have sent a clear message to the nearly 30,000 workers who build them: We want trucks that use less oil, save more money, cut pollution. So far, 23 companies have joined our National Clean Fleets Partnership to reduce their oil consumption or replace their old fleets of trucks with more fuel-efficient models. And collectively, they operate about 1 million commercial vehicles nationwide.

So this is a lot of companies, and some of them are competitors. And if rivals like PepsiCo and Coca-Cola, or UPS and FedEx, or AT&T and Verizon—if they can join together on this, then maybe Democrats and Republicans can do the same. [*Applause*] Maybe Democrats and Republicans can get together.

So when you see these companies' new electric or natural-gas-powered delivery or garbage trucks, it's due to this partnership. And the reason we're here is because Safeway was an early leader on this issue. By improving the aerodynamics of its trucks, investing in larger trailers, more efficient tires, Safeway has improved its own fuel efficiency. And the results are so solid that Safeway now encourages all the companies it hires to ship its products to do the same.

So to help our businesses and manufacturers meet this new goal, we're offering new tax credits, both for companies that manufacture heavy-duty, alternative fuel vehicles and those that build fuel infrastructure so that trucks running on biodiesel or natural gas or hybrid electric technology, they'll have more places to fill up.

Let me say this: The goal we're setting is ambitious, but these are areas where ambition has worked out really well for us so far. Don't make small plans, make big plans. And anybody who had dire predictions for the auto industry, said we couldn't do it, manufacturers couldn't bring jobs back to America—every time they say, that they're proven wrong. Every time somebody says you can't grow the economy while bringing down pollution, it's turned out, they've been wrong. Anybody who says we can't compete when it comes to clean energy technologies like solar and wind, they've had to eat those words. You can't bet against American workers or American industry. You can't bet against America. Otherwise, you're going to lose money every time, because we know how to do this when we set broad, ambitious goals for ourselves.

So from day one, we've known we had to rebuild our economy and transition to a clean energy future, and we knew it wouldn't be easy or quick, and we've got a lot of work to do on both counts. But the economy is growing. We're creating jobs. We're generating more clean energy. We're cutting our dependence on foreign oil. We're pumping out less dangerous carbon

pollution. If we keep going down this road, then we're going to have a future full of good-paying jobs.

We've got assembly lines that are humming with the components of a clean energy age. We've got more of the best trucks and cars in the world designed and engineered and made in America.

If we keep on going, we're going to leave a better future for our children. And I'm proud of Safeway and all its workers for helping to show us the way. If it can be done here, it can be done all across the country.

So congratulations to all of you. Thank you, and God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Jack L. Jacobs, director of distribution for the Eastern division, Safeway Inc.

Statement on Representative Rush D. Holt, Jr.'s Decision Not To Seek Reelection
February 18, 2014

Over his 15 years in Congress, Rush Holt combined a relentless focus on building a brighter future with an unwavering commitment to improving the everyday lives of the New Jerseyans he represents, especially the veterans he works tirelessly to support. Just the second research physicist elected to Congress, no one has worked harder to keep America on the cutting edge of innovation than Rush. Time and time again, he has led efforts to fund science education and basic research. His legacy will live on in our labs, our universities, and our classrooms, where countless math and science teachers have been able to afford college thanks in part to the TEACH grants he helped create. Michelle and I thank Congressman Holt for his leadership and service, and we wish him, his wife Margaret, and their children and grandchildren the very best in the future.

Statement on Representative Gloria Negrete McLeod's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
February 18, 2014

Gloria Negrete McLeod has been a strong advocate for hard-working families and farmers in California's 35th District and across the country. She has been a key partner in promoting access to affordable health care and bringing quality employment and higher education opportunities to all Americans. Gloria has consistently supported working women and their families and has championed programs to help our Nation's veterans find jobs and enroll in college. Michelle and I thank Congresswoman Negrete McLeod for her service and send her, her husband Gilbert, and their family our warmest regards.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico in Toluca, Mexico
February 19, 2014

[*President Peña Nieto spoke first in Spanish, and no translation was provided.*]

President Obama. Well, let me thank President Peña Nieto for his wonderful hospitality in hosting us here today. And it's a special treat to be able to visit his hometown of Toluca.

This is my fifth visit to Mexico, and I think it underscores the incredible importance of the relationship between the United States and

Mexico, not only on commercial issues and security issues, but because of the intimate person-to-person relations that exist between our two countries.

I want to congratulate President Peña Nieto on the outstanding efforts that he's made during the course of this year on a whole range of reforms that promise to make Mexico more competitive and increase opportunity for the people of Mexico. And I'm also very interested in hearing President Peña Nieto's strategies as he embarks on dealing with some of the reforms in the criminal justice system and around security issues, which I know are very pressing on his mind and where we have some excellent cooperation between the United States and Mexico.

More broadly, the North American Leaders' Summit gives us an opportunity to build on the enormous progress that we've already made in making sure that North America is the most competitive region in the world and that we are able not only to continue to integrate our economies effectively to create jobs both in the United States, Mexico, and Canada, but that we're able to project American and Mexican and Canadian goods and services around the world for the benefit of our people.

And the cooperation ranges from how do we make our borders more efficient to moving forward on the Trans-Pacific Partnership that offers the opportunity to open up new markets in the fastest, most populous region of the world, the Asia-Pacific region.

We'll also have the opportunity to discuss how we can work together more closely on scientific and educational exchanges. We're particularly interested in making sure that young people in Mexico and the United States and Canada are able to study and travel in each country, and we're trying to expand those kinds of exchanges.

So this is a wonderful opportunity for us to build on the work that we've already done over the last year.

Political Unrest and Violence in Ukraine

With the President's indulgence, let me say one last thing, and that is about the situation in Ukraine, which obviously has captured the attention of the entire world.

The United States condemns in strongest terms the violence that's taking place there. And we have been deeply engaged with our European partners as well as both the Ukrainian Government and the opposition to try to assure that that violence ends.

But we hold the Ukrainian Government primarily responsible for making sure that it is dealing with peaceful protesters in an appropriate way, that the Ukrainian people are able to assemble and speak freely about their interests without fear of repression.

And I want to be very clear that as we work through these next several days in Ukraine that we are going to be watching very carefully, and we expect the Ukrainian Government to show restraint, to not resort to violence in dealing with peaceful protesters. We've said that we also expect peaceful protesters to remain peaceful. And we'll be monitoring very carefully the situation, recognizing that, along with our European partners and the international community, there will be consequences if people step over the line. And that includes making sure that the Ukrainian military does not step into what should be a set of issues that could be resolved by civilians.

So the United States will continue to engage with all sides in the dispute in Ukraine, and ultimately, our interest is to make sure that the Ukrainian people can express their own desires. And we believe that a large majority of Ukrainians are interested in a—integration with Europe and the commerce and cultural exchanges that are possible for them to expand opportunity and prosperity.

But regardless of how the Ukrainian people determine their own future, it is important that it is the people themselves that make those decisions. And that's what the United States will continue to strive to achieve.

And I do think there is still the possibility of a peaceful transition within Ukraine, but it's going to require the Government, in particular, to actively seek that peaceful transition, and it requires the opposition and those on the streets to recognize that violence is not going

to be the path by which this issue will be resolved.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. in the Governor's Office at the Palacio de Gobierno of the State of Mexico.

Remarks With President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico and Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada to North American Business, Civil Society, and Education Leaders in Toluca

February 19, 2014

President Peña Nieto. Your Excellency Barack Obama, President of the United States of America; Your Excellency Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada; ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests: We are here gathered with representatives from the public, the private, and the social sectors. All of you have walked along us in the construction road to a more competitive North America. And by this, we will have a higher level of development for our peoples.

Members of the media, Mexico welcomes you with open arms to celebrate the North America Leaders' Summit, Toluca 2014. Besides being Toluca, my hometown, this is the place where I was entrusted by the citizens to serve as the Governor of this State, the State of Mexico. The State of Mexico is a clear symbol of the productive integration of North America due to its geographic location and its connectivity. Here we have seen the settlement of advanced automobile facilities and very important logistic hubs. Both are a true example of value chains, global value chains, that make North America excel.

That is why, from Toluca, the three leaders of North America confirm today our commitment to position our region as one of the most dynamic and competitive of the whole world.

I celebrate the fact that we have gathered here with prominent representatives from the academia, from the private sector, and from the civil society from North America. Your contribution has been vital to bring Canada, the U.S., and Mexico closer. With a clear vision in mind, all of you pushed from the onset the great idea that gathers us today: an integrated North America with goals and shared efforts.

[*At this point, there was an interruption in the audio feed.*]

Once, the Free Trade Agreement area was the largest free trade area, with an unprecedented push of trade exchanges, regional investment, and the creation of millions of jobs. With the same innovative spirit, two decades after, we are bound to go beyond and enhance all together the progress that each one of our countries has made, because individually, all our countries have moved forward as well.

Therefore, the principal topics of this seventh summit are very clear: first, inclusive and shared prosperity; number two, new opportunity areas; number three, citizen security; and fourth, regional and global topics. It is upon these four topics today we will work together to boost the economic growth of our countries and a generation of quality jobs and, by this, increase the well-being of our societies.

Ladies and gentlemen, Canada, the United States, and Mexico share strengths that make us move forward. We are a community of more than 450 million inhabitants, where talent and creativity of our peoples excel. Trade exchanges from the three countries are over $1 trillion—in Spanish, we use billions; in English, we use trillions. We have the support and thrive of our entrepreneurs and the capabilities of technological innovation coming from our universities and large companies.

We have principles, we have institutions that make us be solid democracies. We have natural resources, endless natural resources and new opportunities, so we can take advantage of them sustainably.

All of these are factors that lay a solid groundwork for North America's region, and

this is how we will make it a more attractive and competitive region in the world for the upcoming years. I would like to invite you respectfully so that each one of us from the area where you have the responsibility to act, let's make North America a more competitive and a more prosperous region for the sake of the inhabitants of our countries.

Thank you very much.

[*The announcer introduced President Obama.*]

President Obama. Well, good afternoon. *Buenas tardes. Bonjour.* I want to thank Enrique for his extraordinary hospitality and for bringing us here to his beautiful home city. I want to thank the people of Toluca and of Mexico for your great hospitality.

We're all here on business, which means I'm not here as long as I'd like. I have not, for example, sampled some of Toluca's legendary chorizo. [*Laughter*] And hopefully, the next time I stop by, I'm going to be able to have some of that.

All of us—Stephen, Enrique, and I—are focused on how we can deepen what are already incredible ties between our three nations. And I appreciate that all of you are here today, because governments cannot do it alone. The strength of the relationship between Canada, Mexico, and the United States is not just a matter of government policy; it's not just a matter of legislation. There is an incredible richness to the relationship that comes from our people, from our businesses, from our commercial ties, from the students who are traveling back and forth, from the cultures that are shared between us.

And that strength is in some ways unique throughout the world. If you think about North America, to have three borders this long in which we share a common set of values, a common set of principles, a commitment to democracy, a commitment to free markets, a commitment to trade, where we are allies and interact peacefully, that is a precious gift. And it's one that I think all three of us are committed to building and nurturing for future generations.

And for me this is very personal. Some of my closest advisers and allies and political friends are the children of Mexican immigrants who have made an extraordinary life and contribution in the United States. My brother-in-law is Canadian, so you know I have to like Canadians—[*laughter*]—although, I will note that I think we are going to have both the men's hockey teams and the women's hockey teams battling it out. [*Laughter*] So for a very brief period of time, I may not feel as warm towards Canadians as I normally do, at least until those matches are over.

But all—each of you experience these connections in very concrete ways. Enrique already spoke about the volume of trade that takes place and the interactions between our businesses and the subsidiaries of companies in each country that are operating in the other. And so much of the cross-border trade that exists is part of an integrated supply chain that allows us, all three of us as countries, to successfully sell our products and services all around the world.

And so we have every incentive to make this work. And so a lot of our conversation has focused on how do we reduce any continuing trade frictions; how do we make sure that our borders are more efficient; how do we make sure that the educational exchanges between our young people are expanded so that our young people understand their opportunities will be brighter and expanded if in fact they've had the opportunity to study in Canada or to study in Mexico, if they know Spanish, if they know French.

And we use these forums to make concrete progress. Our staffs work incredibly hard to make them successful. But frankly, until our leaders come around, until the three of us meet, sometimes, it doesn't all get done. And this becomes a forcing mechanism for us to move forward on commercial progress, joint security progress, progress on educational and scientific exchanges.

But—and this is the last point I want to emphasize—there are always going to be parochial interests in each of our countries, so that's appropriate, and that will express itself politi-

cally, and we have to be responsive to our own constituencies. If in fact we're going to continue to build and strengthen the ties between our three countries, then you can't just leave it to politicians alone. All of you are going to have to speak out and speak up on the importance of this relationship.

We want to make sure that we're your partners and allies in this process, but when people understand what this means in terms of job creation in the United States, job creation in Canada, job creation in Mexico, how this relationship enhances our security, how it improves our capacity to heat our homes and grow our food and make sure that young people have opportunities in the future, when they hear that from you, it's that much more persuasive.

And so I would encourage all of you to continue to make your voices heard. You'll have certainly a partner in me, and I'm sure that you'll have a partner in Stephen and Enrique as well.

I thank you for participating here today. And once again, Enrique, thank you for the extraordinary hospitality in this beautiful State and in this beautiful city. *Muchas gracias.*

[*The announcer introduced Prime Minister Harper.*]

Prime Minister Harper. Bon après-midi. Buenas tardes. Good afternoon, everybody—[*inaudible*]—wonderful days, and we're delighted to be here in Toluca. And I'm—it's easy to see why you're so proud of your hometown. It's a wonderful spot here.

And, Barack, it's always great to see you. And I like my brothers-in-law too. [*Laughter*] And I'll probably like them no matter who wins the hockey game. [*Laughter*] Anyway.

I want to also thank all of you being here, in particular, obviously, the delegation that has accompanied me from Canada.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Today we have this opportunity to make this North American market more competitive. You are entrepreneurs, you are job creators, employment creators, and all over this continent.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in English as follows.*]

——with so many businesspeople here, as well as academics and others, to discuss how to make North America, which is these three economies combined—which is nearly one-quarter of the world's economy—more prosperous and more competitive.

And it's particularly fitting that it would be you as civil society and business leaders who would lead such a discussion, for although it was NAFTA and the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement before it that opened up the opportunities, this is a trade alliance that in fact consists of very little top-down infrastructure. It has been businesses, people on the ground, social interactions, academic interactions, which have advanced relations, particularly economic relations, that go well beyond trade.

Today, Canadian, American, and Mexican companies do much more than sell things to each other. You increasingly make things together through integrated supply chains. Now, for example, we talk about the fact, in Canada obviously, that the Canadian-American trade relationship is the largest in the world; certainly, the U.S. is our largest export market. But Canadian exports to the United States contain an average of 25-percent American content. Likewise, Mexican exports to the United States include an average of 40-percent U.S. content.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

So this is why we want to tighten our relationships and increase the competitiveness in the region. And we call on the entrepreneurs—of course, the Canadian and U.S. companies are grabbing occasions and opportunities in Mexico—throughout the continent and to create employment seedbeds and to——

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in English as follows.*]

Jobs include organizations as diverse as TransCanada, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, and Beef Canada, the Canola Council, Linamar, Scotiabank, and many others that I know are represented with us here today. And they have tremendous growth prospects in fields such as energy, in education, agri-food, information and communications technologies, banking and financial services, and many, many others, particularly when one looks at the—not just the rapid transformation in this country over the past 20 years, but the very aggressive reforms that are being undertaken by President Peña Nieto's administration.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

And having said this, the world, the entire world is not what it used to be in 1994.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in English as follows.*]

Different realities from 20 years ago are realities we must adapt to today. They include obviously the ongoing uncertainty, market uncertainty that remains from the global recession and also from a global economy that is much more competitive from many other regions.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

We must work together to be able to abate the barriers and for the benefit of our populations.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in English as follows.*]

And so, as Canadians, Mexicans, and Americans, we need to look for ways to work together and to look forward.

Thank you for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:03 p.m. in the Salon del Pueblo at the Palacio de Gobierno of the State of Mexico. In his remarks, he referred to his brother-in-law Konrad Ng. President Peña Nieto spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on Gap Incorporated's Decision To Increase Employee Wages
February 19, 2014

In my State of the Union Address, I asked more businesses to do what they can to raise their employees' wages. Today I applaud Gap Inc. for announcing that they intend to raise wages for their employees beginning this year, a decision that will benefit about 65,000 workers in the U.S. As a chief executive, I've required Federal contractors to pay their employees a wage of at least $10.10 an hour, and more States are taking steps to raise their minimum wage as well. But only action from Congress can make a difference nationwide. Right now there is a bill in front of both the House and the Senate that would boost America's minimum wage to $10.10 an hour and lift wages for more than 16 million workers, all without requiring a single dollar in new taxes or spending. It's time to pass that bill and give America a raise.

Joint Statement by President Obama, President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico, and Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada—21st Century North America: Building the Most Competitive and Dynamic Region in the World
February 19, 2014

We, the Leaders of North America, met today in Toluca, Mexico, to recognize the strength of our relationship and open a new chapter in our partnership. We are determined

to promote inclusive broad-based economic growth for the wellbeing of our citizens, so that 21st century North America sets new global standards for trade, education, sustainable growth, and innovation. Our region is among the most competitive and dynamic in the world. We have a shared vision for its future, and a strong political, legal, and institutional framework to build upon.

Our countries are established democracies and share values and aspirations. Countless contacts among our societies bring us together. We generate close to 30 percent of global goods and services. Our trade is at least 265 percent larger than twenty years ago, when the North American Free Trade Agreement came into force, and is now worth more than one trillion dollars per year, while investment within the region has been multiplied by six. Our three economies benefit from each other's stability and complementarities, and a shared commitment to creating good jobs and opportunities for all of our citizens. Private investment is increasingly directed towards North America, in recognition of the competitive advantage of our integrated production and supply chains, and our highly skilled workforce.

Shared and inclusive prosperity

Our engagement as a region with the rest of the world has a direct impact on the competitiveness of our economies and the prosperity of our societies. We will continue to work closely on matters related to international trade, so that our integrated supply chains are deepened and strengthened. We will jointly promote trade and investment in those sectors in which the integration of our production chains serves as a distinct global advantage, and work together to highlight those advantages.

Our governments are committed to developing a North American Competitiveness work plan, focused on investment, innovation and increased private sector engagement. We seek to set new standards for global trade through the prompt conclusion of a high standard, ambitious, and comprehensive Trans-Pacific Partnership, as we promote further trade liberalization in the Asia-Pacific region.

We will develop a North American Transportation Plan, beginning with a regional freight plan and building on existing initiatives. We will also streamline procedures and harmonize customs data requirements for traders and visitors. We will facilitate the movement of people through the establishment in 2014 of a North American Trusted Traveler Program, starting with the mutual recognition of the NEXUS, Global Entry, SENTRI and *Viajero Confiable* programs.

Our governments will leverage the existing bilateral border mechanisms to enhance the secure movement of goods across North America, and promote trilateral exchanges on logistics corridors and regional development. Our governments will designate observers to attend meetings of the border management executive committees already in place. This approach will also be followed within the existing bilateral processes on regulatory cooperation. We will continue to protect and enforce intellectual property rights.

New areas of opportunity

The future success and competitiveness of our region depends on our ability to foster innovation, provide our citizens access to high quality educational opportunities and to technology, and promote a workforce with the skills necessary for success in the 21st century global economy. To help guide these efforts, our governments will engage stakeholders and academics to better assess and plan for the needs of North America's future workforce. We will promote joint research in national laboratories and universities, building connections between North American businesses, particularly entrepreneurs, and technology accelerators. We will first focus on entrepreneurship and innovation exchanges, and actions to advance the economic empowerment of women. Authorities responsible for these efforts will meet in an informal working group to seek greater coordination and collaboration among them.

Academic exchange and educational mobility have long contributed to the mutual understanding of our societies and of the promise of North America. We commit to increase the

number of student exchanges from within the region in our respective higher education systems, in line with the United States' 100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative, Mexico's Proyecta 100,000, and Canada's International Education Strategy. We will explore opportunities for further cooperation in this area.

Energy is a trilateral priority. Developing and securing affordable, clean and reliable energy supplies can drive economic growth and support sustainable development, as we shift towards a low carbon energy future. To build on recent progress in this area, our Energy Ministers will meet later in 2014 to discuss opportunities to promote common strategies on energy efficiency, infrastructure, innovation, renewable energy, unconventional energy sources, energy trade, and responsible resource development, including the development of relevant technical studies.

Our countries will continue to work together to address climate change in pursuit of an ambitious and inclusive global agreement within the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, while also collaborating through complementary mechanisms like the Major Economies Forum, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas. In addition, we will intensify our efforts to promote an amendment to the Montreal Protocol to phase-down production and consumption of climate-damaging hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

We will continue to collaborate in the protection of our region's biodiversity and to address other environmental challenges, such as wildlife trafficking and ecosystems at risk. Our governments will establish a working group to ensure the conservation of the Monarch butterfly, a species that symbolizes our association.

Citizen security and global issues

We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of shared responsibility, mutual trust, and respect, in support of our domestic priorities, as we face together the challenges posed by transnational organized crime and other threats to the security of our citizens. As increasingly integrated neighbors, we recognize the need to collaborate effectively to counter global threats, such as international terrorism, and to protect our shared critical infrastructure.

The effective exchange of information and coordination among law-enforcement authorities will remain essential. We will continue to coordinate and pursue new areas of cooperation to counter drug trafficking, arms trafficking and other illicit trade, consistent with our laws and constitutions. To more effectively counter money laundering and illicit financial flows while ensuring the efficient interconnection of our systems, our authorities will enhance their dialogue on financial sector regulation and supervision. Our governments share a commitment to combating human trafficking in all its forms and will work toward improving services for the victims of this crime.

To strengthen regional security, we will continue to cooperate with our partners in Central America and the Caribbean, and with other countries in the hemisphere to promote development, economic growth and citizen security. We will provide capacity building support, and seek closer collaboration on financial inclusion and social safety nets, among other areas. We will broaden the scope of our efforts by including actions on disaster risk prevention and insurance, wildfire management, and access to affordable and clean energy, and will promote sustainable social development.

North America's response to the H1N1 pandemic in 2009 remains an example of timely and effective cooperation. We will build upon the North American Plan for Animal and Pandemic Influenza (NAPAPI) to strengthen our preparedness and response to future public health events.

North America will continue to develop collective solutions to global challenges. Our three countries will increase our already robust cooperation across the United Nations and other multilateral bodies. We will engage in the definition of the post-2015 development agenda with an inclusive approach that addresses inequalities and seeks to ensure that global objectives are pursued according to na-

tional standards of accountability. We support the Open Government Partnership, and we are committed to transparency and open government across the world. We will also continue to promote democracy, human rights and the respect of international law throughout the world and in the Americas, consistent with the values enumerated in the Inter American Democratic Charter.

Delivering on our agenda

The success of this vision will hinge on its follow up. Our governments will carry out periodic consultations on the implementation of our agreements, reporting to leaders on the progress of our efforts before each upcoming North American Leaders' Summit. Our countries will also develop a new outreach mechanism in 2014, through which experts and stakeholders will be able to share their perspectives on our agenda and propose new lines of action.

The collaboration between our governments, civil societies, academics, entrepreneurs, and other actors, has a direct and positive impact in the lives and wellbeing of our peoples. The future of North America is even more brilliant than its past and together we can make it the most competitive and dynamic region in the world.

President Obama and President Peña Nieto welcome Prime Minister Harper's offer for Canada to host the next North American Leaders' Summit in 2015.

Toluca, Mexico, February 19, 2014

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's News Conference With President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico and Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada in Toluca, Mexico
February 19, 2014

President Peña Nieto. Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. Members of the media; Your Excellency, President of the United States of America Barack Obama; Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper: Once again, I would like to welcome you to our country.

It is a great honor to have hosted you for the North American Leaders' Summit here in the State of Mexico and Toluca, its capital city, a State that I had the great honor of being the Governor of before I took office with the greatest honor in the world of politics, and that is to lead the course of my country.

That is why I am very glad that we have had the opportunity of having this meeting. And I would like to congratulate myself for creating a space where we have had dialogues, where we have outreach to our countries, and where we have strengthened our friendship. I can be certain that the warm space where we have met is very different from what the teams of men and women representing Mexico in Sochi are having in Russia. They are in a very cold weather and fighting hard to win a medal. So be welcome to this very warm weather.

I would like to present to you a summary; I would to summarize for the media and for your delegations the scope of our meetings. I would like to share with you that we have two highlights in our meetings. First, we had a bilateral with President Barack Obama and with his delegation and their counterparts from Mexico to address the following, and I would like to share this with you.

First of all, we assessed the breakthroughs related to the agreements made during President's Obama past visit in May to our country and now during his fifth visit. And I must note that Mexico ranks top of the list of the most visited countries by President Obama during this term. And we were able to identify the level of progress of the agreements made back then; how much we have advanced the exchange between high-level officials to precisely boost the trade and commercial relationship that Mexico and the U.S. have.

We have also analyzed the possibility of setting forward new mechanisms to build and fund strategic projects. We have agreed to work on a proposal that would help us find different mechanisms to fund projects so that we can give a new life to our infrastructure, to have a more agile and have safer commercial transactions between our countries.

Specifically, we talked about education, and we have set to the task to have more academic exchanges so that more Mexican students can study in the United States and, reciprocally, students from the United States come to Mexico to study. The number of students so far is somehow low, considering the potential that we have. And out of the 14,000 students that Mexico go to the United States to study, we have set a goal and that is to increase year by year this figure and reach 100,000 students a year that visit the United States and 50,000 students from the U.S. coming to Mexico to study.

We have revised our security agenda and we have agreed to maintain a strategic dialogue, to coordinate efforts so we can face a common issue: security in both of our countries and, specifically, security at the border.

On the other hand, I would like to refer to the outcome of the North American Leaders' Summit. Therefore, I would like to share with you a—highlights in terms of the agreements reached in this framework. We have worked on four main topics. The first one is to foster a shared and inclusive prosperity. We have agreed to work on a plan to boost competitiveness. We also have agreed to work on a North America transport plan, which would give us better infrastructure in our three countries to make the commerce that happens between our three nations thrive.

We also agreed to standardize and expedite all the procedures that take place at our customhouses. We have also agreed to enable the movement of individuals and, by this, have Trusted Travelers Programs. We have, each one, a program of this nature with a purpose in mind that all the travelers that are part of the Trusted Travelers registers in our countries is considered as a vetted traveler in North America.

Additionally, in terms of the second topic, we have addressed areas of opportunity. And I must insist, in terms of our binational agenda with the United States, we have added up Canada to work on a program to train professionals by increasing our academic exchanges and ensuring mobility of students between our three countries.

We have also agreed to foster sustainable development, working towards the mitigation of the effects of climate change. And in the area of sustainability, we have also agreed to work on the preservation of the Monarch butterfly. It is a landmark species in North America. This is a species present in our three countries, and we have agreed to work a task force with a presentation from our three countries to preserve the Monarch butterfly.

Then, another topic is citizen security and regional topics. We have agreed to give privilege to the exchange of information, and we have also privilege to coordinate efforts between law enforcement authorities. We will reinforce the measures aimed to fight money laundering and illicit financial flows. And for that purpose, we need to integrate our financial systems further.

We have also restated our commitment to support and cooperate with the Central America region as well as the Caribbean because they are partners in this hemisphere. We have committed to foster development, economic growth, and citizen security as well.

Basically, I have summarized the commitments made during the summit. And fourthly, we have committed, the three of us, to give follow-up to all the agreements made. We—besides making agreements, we have committed to give follow-up to each one of those agreements and we have committed to make them happen.

Finally, I would like to share with you that in order to reach our goals, we need to identify that North America is quite valuable. The free trade agreement executed 20 years ago and the intense dialogue that we have between our three countries in the North American region is very valuable, and every exchange is based

on trust. And we share a very good relationship between all of us who lead our countries.

This North American Leaders' Summit has been a very good opportunity to specify what our commitments will be and what are the tasks for the future. And it has also served as a space to restate our friendship, the good relationship that we have, and the respect that we pay to each other. And we have committed to work hard to make a significant contribution, to make North America a more competitive region, I would dare to say, the most competitive region in the world. And this is a region that has a true call for prosperity. And we will work to provide better well-being to the citizens of our countries.

We have made great strides. We create plenty of jobs due to the economic relationship that we have managed to achieve, but we want more. We want more development. We are aware of the potential that we find in North America. And I make a pledge so that the seventh summit of leaders of North America serves its purpose.

Once again, we welcome, and I would like to say that I hope you have had a very pleasant stay in Toluca, and I hope that this visit has been very fruitful. And I hope that we have been able to build an even stronger relationship.

Thank you.

[*At this point, the moderator introduced President Obama.*]

President Obama. Buenas noches. To President Peña Nieto, to the people of Toluca and the people of Mexico, thank you so much for your extraordinary hospitality. Thank you again, Enrique, for welcoming us to your hometown and home State, which, like the beautiful surroundings tonight, reflects Mexico's proud history as well as the economic dynamism of today's Mexico.

I want to thank Presidents Peña Nieto and Prime Minister Harper for their partnership in deepening the extraordinary ties between our countries, especially the trade that supports good jobs for our people. For the United States, Canada and Mexico are two of our largest trading partners, with trade that supports millions of American jobs. Thanks in part to our efforts to boost U.S. exports, American exports to Canada and Mexico continue to grow faster than our exports to the rest of the world.

Together, our countries have strengths that give North America a tremendous competitive advantage: the skills of our workers, manufacturing that's growing, and new sources of energy. And so we have to take advantage of these competitive advantages, and we need to do it together. All of this positions us to be a powerhouse in the global economy. And that's why we're here, to make sure that we're doing everything we can to be more competitive and create more jobs: in Canada, in Mexico, and in the United States.

First, we're focused on making it easier to trade. Earlier today I signed a new Executive order to make it easier for companies that want to export and import. Instead of dealing with dozens of different Federal agencies and long paper forms, we're going to create a one-stop shop online so companies can submit all their information in one place and save themselves time and money. We're going to keep investing in infrastructure—like roads, bridges, border crossings—so our goods are getting to market faster. We've agreed to keep working to make it easier for our businesspeople and tourists to trade and travel. And we're going to step up our efforts to streamline and eliminate regulations or the redtape that can sometimes stifle trade and job creation.

We've agreed to keep working to complete negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, including strong protections for our workers and the environment, so that we can compete in the fast-growing markets of the Asia-Pacific. And because it will grow the U.S. economy and make the United States more attractive to investment and because we have to do right by our families and our values, I've reiterated that immigration reform remains one of my highest priorities.

I'm also very pleased that we've agreed to keep expanding educational partnerships, as Enrique mentioned, so our young people develop the skills they need to succeed in a global

economy. And this builds on my initiative that we call 100,000 Strong in the Americas. We want more students from the United States studying throughout the hemisphere, and we want more students from places like Mexico and Canada studying in the United States, so that they're developing familiarity and partnerships and friendships that will serve them and serve our countries well for decades to come.

Second, we continue to deepen our clean energy partnerships, which create jobs and combat climate change. Yesterday I announced that the United States will develop new fuel economy standards for heavy-duty trucks, standards that reduce carbon pollution. And today all three of our nations have agreed to work together to meet high fuel standards for these heavy-duty trucks.

And more broadly, we agreed to join with our Central American and Caribbean partners on a regional energy strategy. And this builds on the commitment I made in Central America last year to help our partners across the region reduce their energy costs and become more competitive. On a global level, we agreed to keep standing together as we push for an international agreement to phase down the production and consumption of dangerous hydrofluorocarbons.

Number three, we know that realizing our full potential as individual countries and as a region means confronting the criminals and narcotraffickers who unleash so much violence on our citizens. Here in Mexico, the security forces and the Mexican people continue to make enormous sacrifices in that fight, and our three nations are united against this threat. In the United States, we continue to be committed to reduce the demand for illegal drugs, and we'll continue our unprecedented efforts to combat the southbound flow of illegal guns and cash.

And finally, given our shared commitment to democratic values and human rights, I want to take this opportunity to address the situation in Venezuela and Ukraine and the unacceptable violence in those two countries, which the United States strongly condemns.

In Venezuela, rather than trying to distract from its own failings by making up false accusations against diplomats from the United States, the Government ought to focus on addressing the legitimate grievances of the Venezuelan people. So, along with the Organization of American States, we call on the Venezuelan Government to release protesters that it's detained and engage in real dialogue. And all parties have an obligation to work together to restrain violence and restore calm.

With regard to Ukraine, along with our European partners, we will continue to engage all sides. And we continue to stress to President Yanukovych and the Ukrainian Government that they have the primary responsibility to prevent the kind of terrible violence that we've seen, to withdraw riot police, to work with the opposition to restore security and human dignity and move the country forward. And this includes progress towards a multiparty technical government that can work with the international community on a support package and adopt reforms necessary for free and fair elections next year.

Ukrainians are a proud and resilient people who have overcome extraordinary challenges in their history, and that's a pride and strength that I hope they draw on now. Meanwhile, I've urged the military in Ukraine to show restraint and to let civilians pursue the dialogue necessary for progress. We've obviously seen reports of a truce between the Government and the opposition. If the truce is implemented, it could provide space for the sides to resolve their disagreements peacefully.

And going forward, we'll continue to do whatever we can to support Ukrainians as they seek a peaceful solution and respond to the aspirations of the Ukrainian people for a strong, unified democracy that's fully integrated into the international community.

So again, I want to thank Enrique and the people of Mexico and the people of Toluca for their wonderful hospitality. If we stay focused on our shared vision of a North America that's more integrated and more competitive, then progress in each of our countries will mean more prosperity and opportunity for everyone.

So thank you very much.

[*The moderator introduced Prime Minister Harper. Prime Minister Harper then spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Prime Minister Harper. Allow me to start out by thanking President Peña Nieto for his generous hospitality. We have had a wonderful stay in this wonderful country, in Mexico, and we are eager to come back soon.

Today I had fruitful meetings and dialogues with my commercial partners from Mexico and in regard to services, information, and also shared and fundamental values and, of course, a democratic and peaceful world.

Today we celebrate the 20th anniversary of NAFTA. As time can tell us, this treaty was successful, and it started guaranteeing prosperity from one extreme to the other of the hemisphere. The volume of exchanges has—is fourfold now and is over $30 billion. And we have now seen exponential growth and can hope for exponential growth in years to go.

We are in agreement to say that we can still grow the success of NAFTA, to implement new ways, for instance, in regard to the Trans-Pacific alliance. And so these negotiations should be for the best. The—we need to create employments. This is the key to revitalize the economy and to foster prosperity not only for the Canadian populations for—but for our populations at large.

That's why our government will keep on working and expanding the free trade and commerce with his main partners in North America, as well as with Asia-Pacific regions and in—the world wide, since we want to have access on the other side of the Atlantic, since we have subscribed the free exchange agreement with Europe.

Today President Obama, President Peña Nieto, and myself have discussed and have delved into many topics, especially the state of the world economy at a local, regional level, and competiveness, North American competitiveness. We are truly enthusiastic to collaborate, with this idea of collaborating together. We shall keep on working together with my homologues [counterparts]* and to make and to take a profit of all the occasions for the well-being of our populations. And we will host the forthcoming population of the summit in Canada.

And I would like to add a word in regard to the situation in Ukraine. We—there's been a truce, but we—it is essential that we take action. And at the end of the day, the Ukrainian Government has to be held responsible for settling this situation. The Ukrainian Government took actions, actions that were not only unpopular, but actions that put at risk nature and the aspirations of Ukrainians of becoming an independent nation.

[*Prime Minister Harper repeated his remarks in English as follows.*]

My sincere thanks to President Peña Nieto and the Mexican people for their generous hospitality. We've had a wonderful time here in beautiful Mexico, and I look forward to returning again soon.

Today we had productive meetings with Canada's closest friends and trading partners, partners with whom we share goods, services, and information, and also fundamental values and a vision for a democratic and peaceful world.

This year we mark the 20th anniversary of the North American Free Trade Agreement. And as only time can reveal, the agreement—statistics alone—has been an overwhelming—has been overwhelmingly successful and is responsible for creating prosperity from the bottom to the top of the continent. There has been a fourfold growth in trilateral trade over the last 20 years that now exceeds a trillion dollars. And it is estimated that the NAFTA marketplace will continue to expand exponentially in the decades to come.

We all agree that there is enormous potential to build on the success of NAFTA in new ways, for example, most notably through the

* White House correction.

Trans-Pacific Partnership. We're therefore focused on bringing those negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Developing trade is one of the keys to job creation. It is a key to economic vitality, and it is a key to long-term prosperity not just for the Canadian people, but for all of our peoples. That's why our government will continue to work to expand trade with our two core trading partners in North America, in the Asia-Pacific region more generally, and around the world, just as we did last year, when we expanded our access across the Atlantic through the conclusion of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

In our meetings today, Presidents Peña Nieto, Obama, and I discussed a range of topics as have already been detailed by my colleagues, including the state of the global economy, international regional security, and North American competitiveness. We share a genuine enthusiasm for closer collaboration.

The Presidents and I will continue to work together to address the challenges of the 21st century and to seize the many promising opportunities that the future holds for our peoples. And I do look forward to hosting the next North American Leaders' Summit in Canada.

And I'd also just like to conclude with a word on the situation in Ukraine. We obviously are encouraged to hear the news of a truce. While this is good news, this kind of news, these kinds of words are only meaningful if they are put into action. And ultimately, it is the regime that is responsible for resolving the current situation. It is the regime that created this situation, not by taking decisions that were merely unpopular, but by undertaking decisions that went against the very nature and aspirations of Ukraine as an independent state. And for that reason, we hold the Government responsible and urge them to take all the steps necessary to resolve the situation and to put Ukraine back on the democratic and Euro-Atlantic path that the Ukrainian people desire.

Moderator. We will have a round of questions. Jason McDonald will introduce the Canadian journalist asking the question.

Jason McDonald, Director of Communications, Office of the Prime Minister of Canada. Omar Sachedina from CTV News.

Keystone XL Pipeline Project/Climate Change

Q. Mr. President, good evening to you. Canada has offered to work with the United States on joint rules to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas sector. You've said the Keystone XL pipeline won't be approved if it significantly worsens climate change. The State Department report has concluded that Keystone will not have a significant effect on climate change. So my question to you is, what more needs to be done on both sides of the border for this project to go ahead?

And, Prime Minister, I'd love for you to be able to weigh on this as well. *Et en français aussi, s'il vous plaît.*

President Obama. Well, as I've stated previously, there is a process that has been gone through, and I know it's been extensive and at times, I'm sure Stephen feels, a little too laborious. But these are how we make these decisions about something that could potentially have significant impact on America's national economy and our national interest.

So the State Department has gone through its review. There is now a comment period in which other agencies weigh in. That will be evaluated by Secretary of State Kerry, and we'll make a decision at that point.

In the meantime, Stephen and I, during a break after lunch, discussed a shared interest in working together around dealing with greenhouse gas emissions. And this is something that we have to deal with. I said previously that how Keystone impacted greenhouse gas emissions would affect our decision, but frankly, it has to affect all of our decisions at this stage, because the science is irrefutable. We're already seeing severe weather patterns increase. That has consequences for our businesses, for our jobs, for our families, for safety and security. It has the potential of displacing people in ways that we cannot currently fully anticipate and will be extraordinarily costly.

So I welcome the work that we can do together with Canada. One of the wonderful

things about North America is, we have this amazing bounty of traditional fossil fuels, and we also have extraordinary businesses that are able to extract them in very efficient ways. And that's something that we should welcome because it helps to promote economic growth. But we only have one planet, and so I believe that ultimately, we can both promote economic development and growth, recognizing that we're not going to immediately transition off of fossil fuels, but that we do have to point to the future and show leadership so that other countries who will be the main emitters fairly soon—China, India, other emerging markets—so that they can look at what we're doing and we have leverage over them in terms of them improving their practices as well.

So this will be a joint effort. I'm very eager to consult with Stephen around those issues. And Keystone will proceed along the path that's already been set forth.

Prime Minister Harper. Let me just say a couple of things. First of all, obviously, President Obama and I had an exchange on this. My views in favor of the project are very well known. His views on the process are also equally well known. And we had that discussion and will continue on that discussion.

I would just say two things about the process. First, on the issue of climate change, which is a shared concern, Canada and the United States have similar targets at the international level. We already cooperate on several—in several sectors in terms of emissions reductions. But in terms of climate change, I think the State Department report already was pretty definitive on that particular issue.

The other thing I'd just draw attention to, just because I think it's useful to point out the benefits to Canada, is the reform that we have done in—of environmental review and assessments of projects in Canada. As you know, a couple years ago, we moved to reform our system so that we have a single review wherever possible—a single review, a multidimensional review—that happens over a fixed timeline. And I think that is a process that is tremendously useful in giving investors greater certainty in terms of the kind of plans they may have in the Canadian economy.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

And now I shall repeat my question—I shall repeat my comments in French.

We—President Obama has put the cornerstone, and I can only echo on the American process that President Obama has proposed. We already had a conversation in this regard. I'd like to add two comments in regard to this process. First, in regard to climate change, we do share these concerns not only in the United States, but worldwide. We are already collaborating in many sectors to abate the green gas effect emissions.

And at the same time, we have—we understand that the State Department conclusions are quite correct. And we wish to push forward the investments throughout North America. So we have established reviewal system for our peers in a determined and precise timeline. And this gives much better results for our investors.

Moderator. To—[*inaudible*]—from the White House will introduce the American journalist asking the question.

White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney. From the traveling U.S. press, goes to Jim Kuhnhenn of the Associated Press.

U.S. Trade Policy/Trans-Pacific Partnership/Syria/Ukraine/Russia-U.S. Relations/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. Señor Presidente, muchas gracias. Ha sido un placer. Señor Presidente, Prime Minister, about trade, do you worry that longstanding opposition to trade deals in the U.S. from both the President's party and some Republicans pose a threat to the Trans-Pacific Partnership? And do you—in your mind, is it essential that Congress approve it or at least give the President fast-track authority this year, or can it wait until after the U.S. elections in November?

Mr. President, if you'd like to chime in on that as well. You mentioned parochial interests today; I'd be interested in how you intend to bring your Democrats along. But I had a question for you on something else that you raised.

President Obama. How many questions do you got, Jim?

Q. Just one, sir.

President Obama. Okay. [*Laughter*] Because you know I've got to ask—answer that one too, right? That was a pretty slick move. [*Laughter*]

Q. The common denominator in the strife in Ukraine and Syria is the support that those two governments get from Russia, and I'm wondering, sir, if you believe that President Putin bears some responsibility for the intransigence of those two regimes. And to some degree, has this gone beyond just those two countries, and has it become a tug of war between two world powers?

President Obama. Let me answer very briefly on the trade issue. It's not accurate, Jim, to say that my party opposes this trade deal. There are elements in my party that opposes this trade deal, there are elements in my party that opposed the South Korea free trade agreement, the Colombia free trade agreement, and the Panama free trade agreement, all of which we passed with Democratic votes.

So what I've said to President Peña Nieto and Prime Minister Harper is, we'll get this passed if it's a good agreement. And the key at this point is to make sure that our countries, which hold ourselves up as champions of free trade, resolve our legitimate national interests in these negotiations so that we can present a united front against a number of the other participants in the TPP negotiations who don't have as much of a tradition of free trade. And that is to our advantage, precisely because North America has this amazing competitive advantage and we are already relatively open markets.

And part of our goal here is to make sure that the Asia-Pacific region—which is growing faster than anyplace else in the world, has a larger population than anyplace else in the world—that they have a model of trade that is free and fair and open and allows our businesses to compete and allows our workers to make goods and deliver services that those markets are purchasing. And we can only do that if we raise the bar in terms of what our trade models look like.

And I've said this to some of my own constituents who are opposed to trade: that those who are concerned about losing jobs or outsourcing need to understand, some of the old agreements put us at a disadvantage. That's exactly why we've got to have stronger agreements that protect our intellectual property, that open up markets to our agricultural products, that make sure that when it comes to government procurement or sovereign wealth funds in these other countries, that they're not taking advantage of our businesses and preventing us from competing there. That's exactly why we've got to get this done. And I'm very appreciative of the shared vision and commitment that Prime Minister Harper and President Enrique Peña Nieto have on this issue.

Now, with respect to Syria and the Ukraine, I do think it is worth noting that you have in this situation one country that has clearly been a client state of Russia, another whose Government is currently—been supported by Russia, where the people obviously have a very different view and vision for their country. And we've now seen a great deal of turmoil there that arose organically from within those countries.

I don't think there's a competition between the United States and Russia. I think this is an expression of the hopes and aspirations of people inside of Syria and people inside of the Ukraine who recognize that basic freedoms—freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, fair and free elections, the ability to run a business without paying a bribe, to not be discriminated against because of your religion or your beliefs—that those are fundamental rights that everybody wants to enjoy.

Now, Mr. Putin has a different view on many of those issues, and I don't think that there's any secret on that. And our approach as the United States is not to see these as some cold war chessboard in which we're in compe-

tition with Russia. Our goal is to make sure that the people of Ukraine are able to make decisions for themselves about their future, that the people of Syria are able to make decisions without having bombs going off and killing women and children, or chemical weapons, or towns being starved because a despot wants to cling to power.

Those express our values and our national interests, and we will continue to express those national interests. There are times, I hope, where Russia will recognize that over the long term they should be on board with those values and interests as well. Right now there are times where we have strong disagreements. And when I speak to Mr. Putin, I'm very candid about those disagreements, even as we will continue to pursue cooperation with Russia on areas where we have shared concerns.

But I want to emphasize this: The situation that happened in Ukraine has to do with whether or not the people of Ukraine can determine their own destiny. And my Government and Vice President Biden, and I personally, have expressed to President Yanukovych the need for him to recognize the spirit of the Ukrainian people and work with that, as opposed to trying to repress it. And so we'll continue to stand on the side of the people.

My hope is, at this point, that a truce may hold, but Stephen's exactly right. Ultimately, the Government is responsible for making sure that we shift towards some sort of unity government, even if it's temporary, that allows us to move to fair and free elections so that the will of the Ukrainian people can be rightly expressed without the kinds of chaos we've seen on the streets and without the bloodshed that all of us, I think, strongly condemn.

Prime Minister Harper. I'll just—on the issue of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, as I said, we are wanting to see and committed to seeing a good, comprehensive Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement. I think it's in all of our interests for the reasons that have already been laid out. That said, the Government of Canada's position is always clear in these matters that we will only come to an agreement when we are convinced the agreement is in the best interest of Canada. And we will stay at the table as long as it takes to get to that particular situation.

And I think we have the track record to prove it. Our Government, the current Government of Canada, has signed more trade agreements than all previous Canadian governments combined. What I would say is this—I'm not going to comment on the process in Congress. What I would say is this: The reason I said what I said about working until we get an agreement that is in the interest of Canada is we will have to have an agreement that can be sold to the Canadian Parliament and ultimately to the Canadian people. And that's what we're aiming for.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

I repeat: In regard to the Trans-Pacific agreement—alliance and in regard to our relations with the Asia-Pacific region, we have our own perspective. And we will negotiate up to the point where we will have an agreement on the table. And we need to show that our administration has subscribed more agreements than any other previous administrations. And so for the Canadian Government, it is essential to note that we can submit these proposals to the Canadian Parliament and of the line—[*inaudible*].

President Peña Nieto. The Mexican stand has been very clear, and specifically, our take on the TPP, we have always stated it: It is of the interest of Mexico. We have been part of the negotiation rounds to eventually reach an agreement of this important opportunity that the TPP offers. We can expand the potential of North America into the Asia-Pacific region. Mexico would do its best for the sake of Mexico to be on the side of the solution, overcome disagreements and eventual roadblocks that the negotiation rounds present. And we hope that it is this spirit that we reach the agreement.

Mexico has made a commitment and has shown political will to be part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We hope that the deal

happens. That is the Mexican stand, and we will work to the best of our ability to reach this goal.

Now, on behalf of Mexico, Miguel Reyes Razo, from the Mexican Editorial Organization, will ask a question.

Mexican Economic Development/Mexico-U.S. Trade Relations

Q. Good evening, everyone. By virtue of the fact that we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the efforts made by Mexico, the United States, and Canada, we have NAFTA for 20 years. I would like to ask Enrique Peña Nieto, the President of my country, what is the outlook of the northern part of this continent in terms of development? And at the same time, Mr. President Peña Nieto, I would like to know, what are the challenges? What are the challenges for the development that we have hoped for, that we are expecting?

And I would like to ask the President of the United States of America, Mr. Obama, and Mr. Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, what is the engagement that we should expect from you? What is your actual commitment to make this region, North America, thrive in economical terms? Now, we have 13½ months of your administration, Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto. And you, Canada and the United States, partners and neighbors of this country, what is your take? What is your take on this 13 months and a half of the Mexican President? Thank you very much for your reply.

President Peña Nieto. Mr. Miguel, I believe that we have been very candid in terms of the huge strength that we see in North America after 20 years of the free trade agreement. Our trade has been able to thrive. We have more commercial exchanges. We have more investment in the region.

And today, we have integrated added value chains between our three countries. That means that we are adding value to products that are offered in this great market. We are fully aware of the economic growth since, so far, we are fully aware of the creation of jobs in North America. That is why we have committed in this summit to take on actions that would help us strengthen our economic ties even further. We have committed to enable trade, to have better infrastructure, to have safer exchanges, and to make our trade be easier. So these are the agreements that we have made today.

And we have also acknowledged the enormous potential. And the future that we see in the horizon would be based on the strengths that we have built upon over the course of the last 20 years. And let us acknowledge that we are three countries that we are like minded in terms of our values. We are three democratic countries. We are three countries who believe in free trade. And our countries have found in this instrument a space to create jobs and to have more development in our nations.

President Obama. Well, as we've said, I think, throughout our meetings today, America's success, Mexico's success, Canadian success are all bound together. I think that if you just look at the facts, Mexico has made enormous strides over the last several decades. And in part, that is because we've seen a greater integration of Mexico in the world economy. I think the United States and Canada have played constructive roles in that. Our ability to trade and engage in commerce with Mexico obviously has created jobs and opportunities in our country as well. And so it's been a mutually beneficial partnership, based on self-interest, but also, as Enrique said, based on common values.

I think we've seen a consolidation of democracy here in Mexico, and I think the kinds of reforms that Enrique has initiated over the last 13 months are ones that will put Mexico in an even stronger competitive footing in the world economy in the years to come.

And I recognize there are still implementation issues that will be involved and there will be a healthy debate here in Mexico, but I'm confident, given the talent of the Mexican people, given the resources of the Mexican people, given the growing capacity of Mexican businesses, and given the fact that we, as a North American entity, constitutes a huge trading bloc and economic powerhouse around the world, that we should anticipate Mexico's

growth to continue, standards of living to continue, jobs and opportunities to continue. And that's what we hope for all our countries.

I'm confident that the partnership that we've developed is good for the United States, creates jobs in the United States, helps businesses in the United States. And if we continue to cooperate and try to reduce some of the barriers that have in the past slowed down our commercial exchanges, as well as educational exchanges and scientific exchanges, then we're going to be successful.

[*Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Prime Minister Harper. Allow me, this is our perspective. While Canada has seen great success, but the development of Mexico throughout this time period that is 20 years has been unbelievable: socially, economically, politically. And Mexico is becoming a world power. And we see this accelerating process with the support of President Peña Nieto.

We—you have made comments on the challenges to meet. I think that the greatest one is the need to keep on increasing the flow of goods and services and information across our borders at a time where risks and threats to security are also increased across the borders. And that will be the greatest challenge to meet.

[*Prime Minister Harper repeated his remarks in English as follows.*]

Look, I think the NAFTA relationship, as I've said before, has been tremendously successful for all of us. But I think, looking back 20 years, the development of Mexico on all levels—economic, social, and political—over the period has been incredible. It's a process that is accelerating under President Peña Nieto's very bold vision for the future, and Mexico is increasingly becoming a global economic player.

You asked about challenges. I think the biggest single challenge is in an era where we are seeing and need to see even greater movement of goods, services, people, investments, information flows across our borders, that at the same time, the risks and the threats to security across those borders continue to rise. So the big challenge will be how we continue to grow that human and trade flow, while at the same time minimizing the risks.

Moderator. President Peña Nieto, would you like to take the floor so you can officially close this meeting?

President Peña Nieto. Yes, I will. Thank you very much.

Once again, I would like to congratulate myself for this summit. We have built a climate that is based on trust, respect, and we have worked towards a relationship that it's very clear in terms of the responsibilities of each one of the heads of state. And I am certain that this relationship will result in a greater integration, a stronger friendship, and whatever we do for the sake of North America will benefit our peoples.

I would like to bear a testimony of how grateful I am towards the authorities of the State, the Governor of the State of Mexico, Eruviel Ávila. I'd like to thank you for enabling the summit to take place here. I would like to thank the Chief Justice of the State of Mexico. They provided us with their facilities.

And I would like to thank the inhabitants of the capital city of the State of Mexico, Toluca, for their hospitality. I thank them. And I'd like to thank all of them for the inconveniences in all the preparation work and all the security operations needed for this summit. I'm very grateful towards them. And I'm very grateful for the hospitality given to the President of the United States, Barack Obama, and the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper.

Thank you very much, and have a safe trip home. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 7:25 p.m. in the Patio Central at the Palacio de Gobierno of the State of Mexico. In his remarks, President Obama referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. He also referred to Executive Order 13659, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. President Peña Nieto referred to Baruch F. Delgado Carbajal, president, Supreme Court of the

State of Mexico. President Peña Nieto, the moderator, and some reporters spoke in Spanish, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Democratic Governors Association Dinner
February 20, 2014

Hello, everybody. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Well, it is wonderful to see all of you. It is always a great weekend when the Governors come into town. And tonight we're with some of the best and a few of their better halves. And I'm so grateful to all of you for all the great work you're doing.

And I'm grateful for the people who are here to support our outstanding Governors. I want to thank our DGA chair, Peter Shumlin, for the great work that he's doing up in Vermont. His neighbor Maggie Hassan, who is the vice chair and the first time I saw her was another State senator just like me. And she's doing great up in New Hampshire, so we are very, very proud of her.

I'm not going to give a long speech because I think we want to make this more of a conversation. I want to take out some time for questions and answers. But the main thing I wanted to do is just to say thank you for all of you coming out and supporting Democratic Governors.

And Peter alluded to this, but let me underscore it. Folks here in Washington like to talk abstractions. You get into a lot of ideological debates. The problem for Governors is that they actually have to do something and they just can't talk. And they have to be practical. They have to understand a wide range of issues that are affecting a wide range of constituents. And the work that these Governors do each and every day are having a concrete impact in helping to shape the debate in ways that are extraordinary.

And the challenge we have sometimes in politics is that the national politicians and the national races get all the attention. But so often, the action—how our policies are actually impacting our constituents day to day—are being determined by Governors and State legislatures.

And if there's one message I want to deliver today to every Democrat and every person who's interested in supporting Democratic policies, it's that you got to pay attention to the States. You have to stay focused on what's happening in the States, and you have—you especially have to pay attention to what's happening in the States during midterm elections. Because we know how to win national elections, but all too often, it's during these midterms where we end up getting ourselves into trouble, because, I guess, we don't think it's sexy enough. But the fact of the matter is, is that that's where so much of the action is.

And Democratic Governors are testing ideas, and they are innovating and implementing critical policies all across the board. And that's work that obviously is made tougher when you don't always have a Congress that is cooperating. And what binds together all these Democratic Governors is a pretty simple idea, and that's the idea of opportunity: the idea that if you work hard in this country, no matter who you are, where you come from, what you look like, what your last name is, you can make it.

And we recognize as Democrats and you recognize as Governors that government can't do it all or shouldn't—you shouldn't even try to do it all. But government has a critical role to play in helping provide communities and families the tools they need to succeed, if they're willing to work hard, if they're acting responsibly.

And that's as important as ever today, because what we are seeing right now is the economy is slowly healing from what was the worst crisis since the Great Depression. We've now created over 8.5 million jobs since the depths of the recession. Businesses are optimistic this year. CEOs say they want to start reinvesting. We've got an unemployment rate that is as low as it's been since 2005 and is continuing to drop.

But despite all that, for ordinary families—for a whole lot of the constituents of these Governors here—folks are still worried. They're still anxious, in part because if they do have a job, their wages and their incomes have flatlined for over a decade now. They don't feel as if they're getting ahead. In fact, they feel like they're working harder and harder just to stay in place or to avoid slipping back.

And if you look at it statistically—everybody here knows some of the numbers—folks at the very top are doing better and better, but ordinary folks, that middle class that's always been the core of our society and made America different, they're still feeling squeezed. And so everything we do this year, next year, the year after that, and as long as we have the opportunity to serve has to be focused on how are we expanding opportunity; how are we growing that middle class; how are we building an economy that is good for everybody, not just some; how are we making sure that folks, whatever their station in life, can succeed if they're willing to work hard.

And fortunately, we've got a bunch of Democratic Governors who have been willing to implement what I've called an opportunity agenda and that I talked about in the State of the Union. Number one, that we're creating more good jobs out here through manufacturing and clean energy and making sure that we're rebuilding our infrastructure—our bridges, our roads, our ports—all across the country. Number two, making sure that we are giving every child in this country the best education they can get, because we know in the 21st century, that's what it's going to take for them to compete. Number three, training folks throughout their lives with the skills they need to get those good jobs. Number four, making sure that work pays, that if you're out working hard, you're not in poverty and you have a chance to get ahead.

And those simple precepts should be guiding everything that we do this year and for years to come, and that's what we should be talking about as we're supporting incumbent Democratic Governors and candidates for Democratic Governors across the country, open seats.

Now, unfortunately, State by State, Republican Governors are implementing a different agenda. They're pursuing the same top-down, failed economic policies that don't help Americans get ahead. They're paying for it by cutting investments in the middle class, oftentimes doing everything they can to squeeze folks who are bargaining on behalf of workers. Some of them, their economies have improved in part because the overall economy has improved, and then they take credit for it instead of saying that Obama had anything to do with it. I get that. There's nothing wrong with that. But they're making it harder for working families to access health care. In some States, they're making it harder even for Americans to exercise their right to vote.

And we've got a Congress that prefers to say no rather than yes right now. They don't have an affirmative agenda. Their main strategy is to just try to do nothing and see if they can—falsely—give people a sense that somehow the policies that we're trying to pursue aren't working for them.

So the good news is that we are now talking about the issues that are on the minds of people every single day around the kitchen table. And I'll just give you a couple ideas—couple of examples of where I see significant progress all across the country, even if it hasn't been realized in every State.

Number one is on the minimum wage. You've got three out of four Americans support raising the minimum wage. The majority of not just Democrats, but Independents and Republicans, think it's important for us to make sure that if you work full time, you're not in poverty. And we've been seeing businesses around the country that are starting to recognize it's good for their bottom lines to do right by their employees. Yesterday the Gap became the latest business to raise wages for its U.S. employees.

But even though more than half of Republicans in America support raising the minimum wage, Republicans in Congress don't want to vote for it, even though the current proposal in Congress would give more than 16 million

Americans a raise. So I recently required Federal contractors to pay their employees a wage of at least $10.10 an hour. We've got Democratic Governors that are doing their part.

So last year, Jerry Brown signed America's first 10-dollar-an-hour minimum wage into law in California. Dan Malloy in Connecticut and Martin O'Malley in Maryland, who are both here tonight, they are fighting to raise their States' wages as well. It's no surprise then that most of the States that have a higher minimum wage, higher than the Federal minimum wage, are governed by Democrats.

Republican Governors are out of touch with their own citizens on this. Just last November, you had a ballot initiative to raise the minimum wage in New Jersey. Governor Christie opposed it. It got 60 percent of the vote because voters understood this is the right thing to do and it will be good for the economy, not bad for the economy. It will be good because suddenly workers now have a little more money in their pockets and they're out there and businesses have more customers.

And when it comes to making sure that Americans have access to affordable health care, we're seeing the same pattern. Peter alluded to it. Right now we've already got close to 4 million Americans who have signed up for exchanges. We've got 3 million Americans who were able to stay on their parent's plan because of the law. We've got close to 7 million Americans who have access to health care for the first time because of Medicaid expansion. So we've already got well over 10 million Americans just in the first few months, despite problems with healthcare.gov in the first month and a half, who suddenly have the financial security that, in some cases, they've never known before.

And we're doing it while reducing the costs, the health care inflation that's out there and that's been plaguing us and hurting our businesses, our families, and our economies for a very long time. We've seen now three consecutive years of the lowest increase in health care inflation in the last 50, even as we're covering more people.

Now, as you know, there have been a lot of Governors and State legislators that are still resisting doing right by their people. But the good news is, is that we've got a bunch of Democratic Governors who are willing to take on this fight. Terry McAuliffe in Virginia, I know that he is fighting this good fight. And we want to make sure that all across the country, we are supporting Governors who are saying, I'm going to set politics aside, I'm going to do what's right for my constituents.

And ultimately, that's what the American people are interested in. They're not interested in ideological battles. What they're interested in is action that is focused on their lives, on their hopes, on their aspirations. That's what they want us to focus on each and every day. And that's what we are offering: more jobs, better training, better education, better pay, more ladders of opportunity for folks who currently don't have opportunity. That's what our agenda is about, and it is an agenda that resonates with the American people.

But we're going to need your help to make sure that it moves forward. And we wouldn't be able to do that unless we had already some outstanding Democratic Governors who are here and have made me very proud. They are great partners with me.

I appreciate Peter's sentiment. In some cases, in some States, there are some fierce battles when you expand something like health care. The fact that you guys on the frontlines are willing to stand up courageously means the world to me. More importantly, it's going to mean the world to your constituents and future generations.

So thank you, everybody. Appreciate it. I'm proud of you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:39 p.m. at the St. Regis Washington, D.C. hotel.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Libya
February 20, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13566 of February 25, 2011, is to continue in effect beyond February 25, 2014.

Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, his government, and close associates took extreme measures against the people of Libya, including by using weapons of war, mercenaries, and wanton violence against unarmed civilians. In addition, there was a serious risk that Libyan state assets would be misappropriated by Qadhafi, members of his government, members of his family, or his close associates if those assets were not protected. The foregoing circumstances, the prolonged attacks, and the increased numbers of Libyans seeking refuge in other countries caused a deterioration in the security of Libya, posed a serious risk to its stability, and led me to declare a national emergency to deal with this threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

We are in the process of winding down the sanctions in response to developments in Libya, including the fall of Qadhafi and his government and the establishment of a democratically elected government. We are working closely with the new Libyan government and with the international community to effectively and appropriately ease restrictions on sanctioned entities, including by taking actions consistent with the U.N. Security Council's decision to lift sanctions against the Central Bank of Libya and two other entities on December 16, 2011. The situation in Libya, however, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States and we need to protect against this threat and the diversion of assets or other abuse by certain members of Qadhafi's family and other former regime officials. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Libya.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Democratic Governors
February 21, 2014

Well, it is wonderful to have America's Governors in town, and Michelle and I look forward to hosting with their spouses our annual Governors' reception here and dinner. And it's always a great opportunity to exchange ideas and hear what's happening at the local level.

Today we did bring our Democratic Governors to the White House to spend some time talking about a couple of issues that are of critical importance to our constituencies and, I think, to the country. And one of those is the issue of the minimum wage and what we can do to give America a raise.

Many of the Governors in this room are pushing to raise their State minimum wages to benefit more working families and help to grow their

economies. Governors Abercrombie, Governor Inslee, Governor Malloy, Governor O'Malley, Governor Patrick, Governor Quinn all focused on this in their State of the State addresses.

And in my State of the Union Address, obviously, I promised that I would do what I could as the head of the executive branch of the Federal Government and have already signed an Executive order saying that if you want to do business with the Federal Government as a Federal contractor, then you need to be paying your employees $10.10 an hour. We don't want somebody who is washing dishes for our troops or helping in some ways to care for them to be living in poverty when they're working full time.

And what we've discovered in looking at this issue is, is that increasingly, businesses recognize that raising wages for their employees is a smart business decision because they end up having lower turnover rates, higher productivity, higher morale, folks stay longer and are more focused on the job rather than having to worry about whether or not they can pay their bills at the end of the month.

And this is not just good policy, it also happens to be good politics. Because the truth of the matter is, the overwhelming majority of Americans think that raising the minimum wage is a good idea. That is true for Independents, that is true for Democrats, and it's true for Republicans. So in fact, where we've seen some of these issues going to referendum, for example, in New Jersey, even though the Republican Governor opposed it, it passed by 60 percent.

And the reason that this is important is not because everybody is going to be benefiting from a hike in the minimum wage. The truth is, is that most working Americans make more than the minimum wage already. But people, I think, instinctually understand that part of what this country should be about is if you're working hard and taking responsibility, that you can get ahead and that you can look after your family. And raising the minimum wage will help up to 16 million Americans, and that's a big deal. And that could give a boost to our economy as a whole.

So I'm going to continue to press Congress to pass a Federal minimum wage bill that goes up to $10.10 an hour, being sponsored currently by Senators Harkin and Representatives Miller. I'm going to be seeking Republicans who are game to work with us and prepared to work with us on this issue. As I said at the State of the Union, it's not something that requires a big bureaucracy, and it doesn't require a lot of Federal spending. All it requires is for us to stake out a claim on behalf of American workers that's consistent with our values as a nation.

And I'm going to be interested in hearing of the efforts of the Governors in this room to see what they can do to make sure that America gets a raise.

So I appreciate their presence. We've got a lot of other issues on the plate, but I wanted to highlight that one because I think it's something that is on a lot of people's minds: How can we boost people's incomes and wages if they're working hard so they can get ahead?

Thank you so much, everybody. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; and Rep. George Miller III. He also referred to Executive Order 13658, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
February 22, 2014

Hi, everybody. Restoring the idea of opportunity for all requires a year of action from all of us. Wherever I can act on my own, I will. And whenever I can ask more Americans to help, I'll do that too.

In my State of the Union Address, for example, I asked more business leaders to take action to raise their employees' wages. Because even though our economy is growing and our businesses have created about 8½ million new

jobs over the past 4 years, average wages have barely budged.

So it's good news that, earlier this week, one of America's largest retailers, the Gap, decided to raise wages for its employees beginning this year. Their decision will benefit about 65,000 workers in the U.S. That means more families will be able to raise their kids, finish their studies, or keep up on their bills with a little less financial stress and strain.

And Gap's CEO explained their decision simply. He said, "[It's] right for our brands, good for our people, and beneficial to our customers." And he's right. Raising Americans' wages isn't just a good deed, it's good business and good for our economy. It helps reduce turnover, it boosts productivity, and it gives folks some more money to spend at local businesses.

And as a chief executive myself, that's why I took action last week to lift more workers' wages by requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour.

In the year since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, six States have passed laws to raise theirs, and more States are working on it as we speak. But only Congress can finish the job and lift Americans' wages across the country.

Right now there's a bill before Congress that would boost America's minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. It's easy to remember: 10–10. That bill would lift wages for more than 16 million Americans without requiring a single dollar in new taxes or spending. But even though a majority of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans across the country support raising the minimum wage, Republicans in Congress don't want to give it a vote.

Hard-working Americans deserve better than "no." Let's tell Congress to say "yes." Pass that bill. Give America a raise. Because here in America, no one who works hard should have to live in poverty, and everyone who works hard should have a chance to get ahead.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:05 p.m. on February 21 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on February 22. In the address, the President referred to Glenn K. Murphy, chairman and chief executive officer, Gap Inc. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 21, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on February 22.

Remarks at the National Governors Association Dinner
February 23, 2014

Good evening, everybody. Please have a seat. Have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House. Everybody looks fabulous. I am truly honored to be one of Michelle Obama's guests tonight here at dinner. [*Laughter*] I want to thank all the Governors and their better halves for being here tonight, especially your chair, Mary Fallin, and your vice chair, John Hickenlooper.

Tonight we want to make sure that all of you make yourselves at home, to which I'm sure some of you are thinking, that's been the plan all along. [*Laughter*] But keep in mind what a wise man once wrote: "I am more than contented to be Governor and shall not care if I never hold another office." Of course, that was Teddy Roosevelt. [*Laughter*] So I guess plans change.

I look forward to working with each of you not just in our meetings tomorrow, but throughout this year, what I hope to be a year of action. Our partnership on behalf of the American people on issues ranging from education to health care to climate change run deep, deeper than what usually hits the front page.

Being here tonight, I'm thinking about moments that I've spent with so many of you during the course of the year: with Governor Patrick at a hospital in Boston, seeing the survivors of the Boston bombing, seeing them fight through their wounds, determined to return to

their families, but also realizing that a lot of lives were saved because of the preparations that Federal and State and local officials had carried out beforehand; with Governor Fallin at a firehouse in Moore, thanking first responders who risked their lives to save others after a devastating tornado, but once again seeing the kind of State-Federal cooperation that's so vital in these kinds of circumstances; spending time with Governor O'Malley at the Naval Academy graduation last spring and looking out over some of our newest sailors and marines as they join the greatest military in the world; and reminding ourselves that on national security issues, the contributions of the National Guard obviously are extraordinary, and all of you work so closely with them.

So if there's one thing in common in the moments like these, it's that our cooperation is vital to make sure that we're doing right by the American people. And what's common also is the incredible resilience and the goodness and the strength of the American people that we're so privileged to serve. And that resilience has carried us from the depths of the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes to what I am convinced can be a breakthrough year for America and the American people.

That, of course, will require that we collectively take action on what matters to them: jobs and opportunity. And when we've got a Congress that sometimes seems to have a difficult time acting, I want to make sure that I have the opportunity to partner with each of you in any way that I can to help more Americans work and study and strive and make sure that they see their efforts and their faith in this country rewarded.

I know we'll talk more about areas where we can work together tomorrow. So tonight I simply would like to propose a toast: To the families that support us, to the citizens that inspire us, and to this exceptional country that has given us so much. Cheers.

[*At this point, the President offered a toast.*]

And with that, I would like to invite your chair, Governor Mary Fallin, to say a few words. Mary.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:11 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, in her capacity as chair, and Gov. John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado, in his capacity as vice chair, of the National Governors Association; Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts; and Gov. Martin J. O'Malley of Maryland.

Remarks to the National Governors Association
February 24, 2014

Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat.

Welcome to the White House. I know that you've already been doing a lot of work, and I'm glad to be able to come here and engage in a dialogue with all of you. I want to thank Mary and John for their leadership at the NGA. I want to thank my outstanding Vice President, Joe Biden, who is very excited, I think, about the jobs initiative and is going to be—the job training initiative and, I think, is going to be doing a great job on that.

Michelle and I had a wonderful time hosting you guys last night, and I hope all the spouses enjoyed it. And I know Alex enjoyed it. [*Laughter*] One good thing about living here is that you can make all the noise you want and nobody is going to complain. [*Laughter*] And I enjoyed watching some of you with your eyes on higher office size up the drapes—[*laughter*]—and each other.

We don't have a lot of time today, so I want to be very brief, go straight to Q&A and discussion. We're at a moment when our economy is growing; our businesses have now created over 8.5 million new jobs over the past 4 years. But as I've said several times, the trends that have battered the middle class for a couple of decades now are still there and still have to be addressed. Those at the top are doing very well.

Ordinary families still feeling squeezed. Too many Americans are working harder than ever and just barely getting by.

And reversing these trends are going to require us to work together around what I'm calling an opportunity agenda based on four things: number one, more good jobs that pay good wages; number two, training more Americans to be able to take the jobs that are out there right now and the jobs that are created; number three, guaranteeing access to a world-class education for every American child all across our 50 States and our Territories; and making sure that hard work pays off, with wages that you can live on, savings that you can retire on, health insurance that you can count on.

And all of this is going to take some action. So far, just in the past few weeks, I've acted to lift the wages of workers who work for Federal contractors to pay their—make sure their employees are getting paid at least $10.10 an hour. We've ordered an across-the-board reform of our job training programs, much of it aligned with some of the work that Mary has done during her tenure as head of the NGA. We directed our Treasury to create a new way for Americans to start saving for retirement. We've been able to rally America's business leaders to help more of the long-term unemployed find work and to help us make sure that all of our kids have access to high-speed Internet and high-tech learning tools in the classroom.

The point is, this has to be a year of action. And I'm eager to work with Congress wherever I can. My hope is, is that despite this being an election year, that there will be occasions where both parties determine that it makes sense to actually get some things done in this town. But wherever I can work on my own to expand opportunity for more Americans, I'm going to do that. And I am absolutely convinced that the time is right to partner with the States and Governors of—all across the country on these agendas, because I know that you guys are doing some terrific work in your own States.

There may not be much of an appetite in Congress for doing big jobs bills, but we can still grow SelectUSA. Secretary Pritzker's team has put together a terrific formula where we're attracting investors from all around the world to see America as an outstanding place to invest. And I mentioned this at the State of the Union, for the first time last year, what we're seeing is, is that world investors now see America as the number-one place to do business rather than China. And it's a sign of a lot of things converging, both on the energy front, worker productivity, our innovation, our research, our ease of doing business. And a lot of that work is as a consequence of steps we've taken not just at the Federal level, but also at the State level. So we've got to take advantage of that.

Secretary Pritzker has been helping a Belgian company create jobs in Stillwater, Oklahoma, helping an Austrian company create jobs in Cartersville, Georgia. So we can do more of this, and we'd really want to engage with you over the next several months to find ways that we can help market America and your States to businesses all around the world and bring jobs back.

Since I called on Congress to raise the minimum wage last year, six States have gone ahead and done it on their own. Last month, I asked more business leaders to raise their workers' wages. Last week, Gap said it would lift wages for about 65,000 of its employees. Several of you are trying to boost wages for your workers. I'm going to do everything I can to support those efforts.

While Congress decides what it's going to do on making high-quality pre-K available to more kids, there is bipartisan work being done among the folks in this room. You've got Governors like Robert Bentley and Jack Markell, Susana Martinez, Deval Patrick, all expanding funding or dedicating funds to make that happen in their States. And we want to partner with you. This year, I'll pull together a coalition of philanthropists, elected officials, and business leaders, all of whom are excited and interested in working with you to help more kids access the high-quality pre-K that they need.

And while Congress talks about repealing the Affordable Care Act or doing this or doing

that to it, places like California and Kentucky are going gangbusters and enrolling more Americans in quality, affordable health care plans. You've got Republican Governors here—I won't name them in front of the press, because I don't want to get you all in trouble—who have chosen to cover more people through new options under Medicaid. And as a result, millions of people are going to get help.

States that don't expand Medicaid are going to be leaving up to 3.4—5.4 Americans—million Americans uninsured. And that doesn't have to happen. Work with us to get this done. We can provide a lot of flexibility. Folks like Mike Beebe in Arkansas have done some terrific work designing programs that are right for their States, but also provide access to care for people who need it. And I think Kathleen Sebelius, a former Governor herself, has shown herself willing to work with all of you to try to find ways to get that done.

On the West Coast, you've got Governors Brown, Inslee, Kitzhaber who are working together to combat the effects of climate change on their States. We've set up the Task Force of Governors and mayors and tribal leaders to help communities prepare for what we anticipate are going to be intensifying impacts of climate change. And we're setting up climate hubs in seven States across the country to help farmers and ranchers adapt their operations to a changing environment.

In the budget that I'll send to Congress next week, I'm going to propose fundamentally reforming the way Federal Governments fund wildfire suppression and prevention to make it more stable and secure, and this is an idea that's supported by both Democrats and Republicans.

And finally, I want to thank those of you who have worked with Michelle and Jill Biden on their Joining Forces initiative to support our military families. At your meeting here 2 years ago, they asked for your help to make it easier for servicemembers and their spouses to carry licenses for professions like teaching or nursing from State to State, rather than have to get a new one every time they were reassigned. At the time, only 12 States had acted to make this easier for spouses; only 9 had acted to make it easier for servicemembers. Today, 42 States have passed legislation to help spouses; 45 States have made it easier for servicemembers. We've got a few States remaining. Let's get it done for everybody, because it's the right thing to do for those men and women who are working every day to make sure we stay free and secure.

And the point is, even when there is little appetite in Congress to move on some of these priorities, at the State level, you guys are governed by practical considerations. You want to do right by your people, and you see how good policy impacts your citizens, and you see how bad policy impacts your citizens, and that means that there's less room for posturing and politics and more room for getting stuff done.

We want to work with you. And I'm committed to making sure that every single member of my Cabinet, every single person in the White House, every single member of my team will be responsive to you. We won't agree on every single issue every single time, but I guarantee you that we will work as hard as we can to make sure that you succeed. Because when you succeed, the people in your States succeed and America succeeds, and that's our goal.

So thank you very much, and I look forward to having a great discussion. All right? Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, in her capacity as chair, and Gov. John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado, in his capacity as vice chair, of the National Governors Association; Gov. Robert J. Bentley of Alabama; Gov. Jack A. Markell of Delaware; Gov. Susana Martinez of New Mexico; Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts; Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., of California; Gov. Jay R. Inslee of Washington; Gov. John A. Kitzhaber of Oregon; and Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden, who introduced the President.

Statement on Representative John D. Dingell, Jr.'s Decision Not To Seek Reelection
February 24, 2014

Serving nearly six decades in the House of Representatives, John Dingell has earned the distinction of being both the longest serving Member of Congress in U.S. history and one of the most influential legislators of all time. After serving his country in the Army during World War II, John was first elected to Congress in 1955, representing the people of southeastern Michigan in a seat previously held by his father. In Washington, John risked his seat to support the Civil Rights Act of 1964, fought to pass Medicare in 1965, and penned legislation like the Clean Air Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act that have kept millions of Americans healthy and preserved our natural beauty for future generations.

But of all John's accomplishments, perhaps the most remarkable has been his tireless fight to guarantee quality, affordable health care for every American. Decades after his father first introduced a bill for comprehensive health reform, John continued to introduce health care legislation at the beginning of every session. And as an original author of the Affordable Care Act, he helped give millions of families the peace of mind of knowing they won't lose everything if they get sick. Today, the people of Michigan—and the American people—are better off because of John Dingell's service to this country, and Michelle and I wish him, his wife Debbie, and their family the very best.

Remarks Announcing New Manufacturing Innovation Institutes
February 25, 2014

Hello, everybody! Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you. Thank you very much. Hey! Thank you.

Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. We've got some pretty cool stuff up here, and we also have people here who can explain what it all is. But thank you so much for being here. We've got, first and foremost, some people who I'm proud to call friends and have been fighting on behalf of American workers every single day.

We've got the Governor of the great State of Illinois; Pat Quinn is here in the house. We've got somebody who is responsible for trimming my trees and potholes in front of my house—[*laughter*]—and shoveling snow. And I haven't been back for a while; I don't know how it's going, but I'm assuming he's handling his business. The mayor of the great city of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel is here. We've got Phil LaJoy, who's the supervisor of Canton Township, Michigan, who is here. There he is. Good job, Phil.

And we've got some outstanding Members of Congress who are here, especially someone who just announced that this would be his last term in Congress, but is somebody who so many of us have learned from, have admired. He is a man who has, every single day of his life in office, made sure that he was fighting on behalf of people who really needed help. And he is going to be very missed. John, you are not just the longest serving Member of Congress in American history, you're also one of the very best. Michigan's own John Dingell is here. So—[*applause*]. And we are better off because of John's service, and we're going to miss you.

Now, today I am joined by researchers who invent some of the most advanced metals on the planet, designers who are modeling prototypes in the digital cloud, folks from the Pentagon who help to support their work. Basically, I'm here to announce that we're building Iron Man. [*Laughter*] I'm going to blast off in a second. [*Laughter*] We've been—this has been a secret project we've been working on for a long

time. [*Laughter*] Not really. Maybe. It's classified.

But keeping America at the cutting edge of technology and innovation is what is going to ensure a steady stream of good jobs into the 21st century. And that's why we're here today: to take new action to put America at the forefront of 21st-century manufacturing.

Now, this is a moment when our economy is growing, and it has been growing steadily for over 4 years now. Our businesses have created about 8½ million new jobs over the past 4 years. The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in over 5 years. Our manufacturing sector is adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. So there's some good news to report, but the trends that have battered the middle class for decades have become, in some ways, even starker. While those at the top are doing better than ever, average wages have barely budged. Too many Americans are working harder than ever just to keep up. And it's our job to reverse those trends.

We've got to build an economy that works for everyone, not just a fortunate few. We've got to restore opportunity for all people. That's the essence of America: No matter who you are, where you come from, what you look like, how you started out, if you are willing to work hard and take responsibility, you can get ahead in America.

So I've been talking now for months about an opportunity agenda. And let me break it down into four parts. Number one, more good jobs that pay good wages: jobs in American manufacturing, rebuilding our infrastructure, innovation, energy. Number two, training workers with the skills they need to fill those jobs. Number three, guaranteed access to a world-class education for every child in America. And number four, making sure that hard work pays off with wages you can live on and savings you can retire on and health insurance you can count on when you need it.

Now, I'm looking forward to working with Congress wherever they're willing to do something on any of these priorities. And I have to say that the Members of Congress who are here all care deeply about these issues. But let's face it, sometimes, it's hard to get moving in Congress. We've got a divided Congress at this point. And so, in this year of action, wherever I can act on my own to expand opportunity for more Americans, I'm going to seize that opportunity.

And that's why we're here today. Already, my administration has launched two hubs for high-tech manufacturing. One is in Youngstown, Ohio, and it's focused on 3–D printing, an entirely new way by which the manufacturing process can accelerate and supply chains get stitched together and you integrate design and all the way through production in ways that are—can potentially be revolutionary. We've also focused on energy-efficient electronics in Raleigh, North Carolina. And what happens at each of these hubs is, we're connecting leading businesses to research universities so they're able to ensure that America leads the world in the advanced technologies that are going to make sure that we're at the forefront when it comes to manufacturing.

Now, my friend Congressman Tim Ryan, who's here today, helped—where's Tim? I just saw him, there he is—helped us get the first of these hubs off the ground. There's growing bipartisan momentum now behind these efforts. We've got two Republicans and two Democrats—Roy Blunt and Sherrod Brown in the Senate and Tom Reed and Joe Kennedy in the House—that have written bills that would help us create a true network of these hubs all across the country.

So I'm really encouraging Congress to pass these bills. They're good ideas. And what they do is not only help link up our top researchers with our best businesspeople, but suddenly, they become a focal point of opportunity, and businesses around the country and around the world start seeing, huh, if I'm interested in digital technologies, that's the place I should locate. If I'm interested in 3–D printing, let me go there. And so you get a virtuous cycle that can take place. And Congress, I think, has an opportunity to really expand these in a significant way.

In the meantime, while Congress decides on what it's going to do, we're going to go ahead and take some action to launch more of these hubs this year. And today we're announcing the next two advanced manufacturing hubs. One is in the Detroit area, and the other is in Chicago, Illinois.

Now, let me describe a little more why this is so important. For generations of Americans, manufacturing was the ticket to a good middle class life. We made stuff. And the stuff we made, like steel and cars and planes, made us the economic leader of the world. And the work was hard, but the jobs were good. And if you got on an assembly plant in Detroit or in a steel plant in Youngstown, you could buy a home. You could raise kids. You could send them to college. You could retire with some security. And those jobs didn't just tell us how much we were worth, they told us how we were contributing to the society and how we were helping to build America and gave people a sense of dignity and purpose. If they saw a Boeing plane or one of the Big Three cars rolling off the assembly line, they said, you know what, I made that. And they were iconic. And people understood that's what it made—what it meant for something to be made in America.

Now, advances in technology have allowed manufacturers to do more with less. Global competition means a lot of good manufacturing jobs went overseas. There was just more competition. Folks caught up to us, and they, in some cases, just copied what we were doing with lower wages, so the competition was fierce. And in the 2000s alone, we lost about one-third of all American manufacturing jobs, and the middle class suffered for it.

Now, the good news is, today, our manufacturers have added more than 620,000 new manufacturing jobs over the last 4 years. That's the first sustained manufacturing growth in over 20 years. But the economy has changed. So if we want to attract more good manufacturing jobs to America, we've got to make sure we're on the cutting edge of new manufacturing techniques and technologies.

And I just have to emphasize here that—because you'll hear some people say, well, why are manufacturing jobs so special, and this is a service economy. Nobody believes that we're going to duplicate all the manufacturing jobs that existed back in the forties and the fifties, just because the economy has changed. You go into an auto plant now, it's different then it was. Fewer people can make more cars.

But keep in mind that when we have manufacturing in this country, what ends up happening is that, first of all, there are a whole lot of suppliers to those manufacturers, so that one plant may be deceptive. It doesn't tell you all the companies all across the country that are working on behalf of those manufacturers. The services that are provided to those manufacturers, the advertising that's connected to it, and the architects and the designers and the software engineers—all those things may not be counted as manufacturing. But by us having those hubs of manufacturing, it has a ripple effect throughout the economy.

So we've got to focus on advanced manufacturing to keep that manufacturing here in the United States. That's what's going to help get the next Stark Industries off the ground. [*Laughter*]

So today—by the way, my Commerce Secretary, Penny Pritzker, is not here because she's in Silicon Valley meeting with business leaders and talking about how together we can work together to spur economic growth.

The point is, I don't want the next big job-creating discovery to come from Germany or China or Japan. I want it to be made here in America.

And—this is one last point I'm going to make about this—typically, a lot of research and development wants to be colocated with where manufacturing is taking place. Because if you design something, you want to see how is it working and how is it getting made and then tinker with it and fix it and try something different. So if all the manufacturing is somewhere else, the lead we've got in terms of design and research and development, we'll lose that too. That will start locating overseas. And we will have lost what is the single most important thing about American economy, and that is innovation.

So that's what all these hubs are about. They're partnerships that bring together companies and universities to develop cutting-edge technology, train workers to use that technology, and then make sure that the research is translated into real-world products made by American workers.

So the first hub, in Michigan, is going to focus on developing advanced lightweight materials. Detroit has already helping lead the American comeback in manufacturing. Since we stepped in to help our automakers retool, the American auto industry has created almost 425,000 new jobs. And they've already begun using new high-strength steel to make lighter cars that use less gas, save money, help save the planet, cars are still safe, because of these new metals.

And that's just one example of the incredible things these new metals can do. You're seeing the same thing when it comes to lighter armored vehicles for our troops, planes and helicopters that can carry bigger payloads. If you look at some of the new planes that Boeing is manufacturing, they look lighter; even though they have the same capacity, they use less fuel. Wind turbines that generate more power at less cost. Prosthetic limbs that help people walk again who never thought they could. So we believe there's going to be an incredible demand for these metals, both for—both from the military and from the private sector, and we want to make sure they're made right here in America. We want our workers to have those jobs. So that's what our first hub is going to do, focus on making these cool metals.

Second hub, based in Chicago, but keep in mind, this is a consortium of more than 40 companies, 23 universities, labs like Northwestern and University of Illinois, and nearly 200 small businesses. A number of other States are participating in these—in this consortium. It's funded by a $70 million award led by the Defense Department, but the State and its businesses raised $250 million in private funding commitments to help win this bid and make it happen.

So this Digital Manufacturing and Design Innovation [Institute][*] is going to be headquartered not far from downtown Chicago, on Goose Island, where there's also a very superior beer in case you are—[*laughter*]—I'm just letting you know. [*Laughter*] A little hometown plug there. Feel free to use that, Goose Island. [*Laughter*] And it's going to focus on using digital technology and data management to help manufacturers turn their ideas into real-world products faster and cheaper than before. And it will include training to help more Americans earn the skills to do these digital manufacturing jobs.

And this is critical: The country that gets new products to market faster and at less cost, they'll win the race for the good jobs of tomorrow. And if you look at what's happening in manufacturing, a lot of it is much more specific. Right? Companies want to keep their inventories low. They want to respond to consumer demand faster. And what that means is, is that manufacturers who can adapt, retool, get something out, change for a particular spec of a particular customer, they're going to win the competition every time.

And we want that country that is specialized in this to be us, the United States of America. We want suppliers to be able to collaborate with customers in real time, test their parts digitally, cut down on the time and money that they spend producing expensive prototypes. We want our manufacturers to be able to custom-design products tailored to each individual consumer. We want our troops to be able to download digital blueprints they can use to 3–D print new parts and repair equipment right there in the field. And these are all ambitious goals, but this is America. That's what we do; we're ambitious. We don't make small plans.

Now, that doesn't mean we're going to be able to make all these happen overnight. This stuff takes time. And we also know these manufacturing hubs have the potential to fundamentally change the way we build things in America. So 10 years from now, 20 years from

[*] White House correction.

now, imagine our workers manufacturing materials that used to be science fiction: a sheet of metal that's thinner than paper, but is strong as steel. Or our workers being able to design a product using these materials entirely on a computer, they bring it to market, less money, hire folks to build it right here, sell it all over the world. That's what the next generation of American manufacturing could look like.

But to get there, we can't stop at just four of these hubs. I'm really excited about these four hubs; the only problem is, Germany has 60 of them. Germany has 60 of them. Part of the reason Germany has been able to take the lead in certain manufacturing areas is because they've invested in these hubs and then they invest in the training of the workers for these very precise machines and tools, and that means that that cuts into our market share when it comes to manufacturing around the world.

So we can't let Germany have 60 and us have four. We've got to do better. So I'm hoping that we can get these outstanding Members of Congress to push this through so I can sign a bill. But without waiting for Congress, we can launch four new manufacturing hubs this year. That's our intention. My Department of Energy is announcing the competition for the first of these new hubs today. So to businesses and universities or civic leaders who are watching, start forming those partnerships now. Turn your community into a global center for creating high-tech jobs.

We can't turn the clock back to earlier, easier times when thousands of Americans would just punch in at a single factory and pound out the products for the industrial age. But thanks in part to our investment and most importantly to the collaboration of some of these outstanding institutions and leaders, factories that once went dark are turning their lights on again. More assembly lines are churning out the cars that the world wants to buy, humming with components of the clean energy age. If we stay focused on winning this race, we will make sure the next revolution in manufacturing is an American revolution. And we'll make sure that opportunity for all is something that's made in the U.S.A.

Thanks very much, everybody. Congratulations. Good job. Keep it up.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on the Death of Harold Ramis
February 25, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to hear of the passing of Harold Ramis, one of America's greatest satirists and, like so many other comedic geniuses, a proud product of Chicago's Second City. When we watched his movies—from "Animal House" and "Caddyshack" to "Ghostbusters" and "Groundhog Day"—we didn't just laugh until it hurt. We questioned authority. We identified with the outsider. We rooted for the underdog. And through it all, we never lost our faith in happy endings. Our thoughts and prayers are with Harold's wife Erica, his children and grandchildren, and all those who loved him, who quote his work with abandon, and who hope that he received total consciousness.

NOTE: The statement referred to Erica Mann, wife of Mr. Ramis.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels
February 25, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency declared on March 1, 1996, with respect to the Government of Cuba's destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, as amended and expanded on February 26, 2004, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2014.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
February 25, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at an Organizing for Action Summit
February 25, 2014

The President. Hello, OFA! Hey! Well, it is good to see all of you. Thank you. Everybody, sit down, sit down, sit down. The—everybody give Joshua a big round of applause. I thought he did an excellent job. His parents and family, who are with him here today, are very proud. They get a little, special seat. This is nice. [*Laughter*]

The—well, it is great to see all of you. And I could not be prouder of everything that you've done. I just always get excited when I have a chance to see OFA because what I know is that each and every day you are out there in your communities, talking to your friends, talking to your neighbors, talking to your coworkers. And that's how change is made. That's how this country continues to constantly evolve so that it's a little bit fairer and more people have opportunity because wonderful folks, day in, day out, are out there doing their small part to make our democracy work. So I am really, really proud of all of you, and it is great to see all of you.

I—4 weeks ago tonight, actually, I delivered my State of the Union Address. [*Applause*] Yes. And I focused on some ideas that have been at the heart of this journey dating back to 2007, when some of you may have gotten involved in the campaign for the first time. That was back when I had no gray hair——

Audience member. You look good!

The President. Thank you, thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you. Michelle thinks so too. Michelle thinks so too. [*Laughter*]

I didn't wear a tie back then, which I miss. [*Laughter*]

But when we talked about our vision, about why I was running and why so many folks at a grassroots level were getting involved all across the country, there were some basic principles, some basic tenets. And at the core of it was this idea of opportunity, the idea that in America, it shouldn't matter where you started, it shouldn't matter what you look like, where you come from, who you love, what your last name is, what you worship. What matters is you willing to work hard. What matters is your willingness to take responsibility for yourself and your family and your community and your Nation. And if you are willing to do those things, you should be able to get ahead.

It doesn't mean that everybody is suddenly wildly rich. It means that you can make it. It means that you've got some basic security. It means that you can afford a home and that you can send your kids to college and make sure they get a good education. And you can retire with dignity and respect, and you've got health care you can count on. And you can pass on a sense of hope and optimism to your children. That was what we fought for.

And the problem at the time obviously was not just that that idea had been betrayed or was not being fully realized for decades; it was also that we were in the midst of one of the worst financial crises—we didn't fully know it when I was running—but we ended up being in one of the first—the worst financial crises in our history.

And so we've spent a lot of time now digging back, digging out of that—fighting back and digging out of that hole. And it's been challenging, and it's been tough. And some of you in your own personal lives, you've seen the effects of it. Some folks here may have lost their home during that crisis. Some folks here may have lost their jobs during that crisis. Some folks here may have seen someone else in their family suffer from the effects of that great recession.

And the good news is, is that over the course of the last 4½ years, we have seen the economy grow. We've seen our businesses create more than 8.5 million new jobs. We've seen—the auto industry has come roaring back. We've seen manufacturing creating jobs consistently for the first time since the 1990s. We've got a lot of work behind us clearing away the rubble of that crisis.

And so I believe that this year we are poised potentially to see a breakout year for America. There's no country on Earth that is better positioned to take advantage of the future than us. We've got the best businesses, the best workers, the best universities, the best scientists, the most innovative economy on Earth.

But—and here's the catch, and this is what I talked about at the State of the Union Address—what we've still seen, even as we've recovered from the recession, is this long-term trend that has not yet been reversed in which we've got folks at the very top doing better than ever and working class families, middle class families, folks struggling to get into the middle class have continued to have to work harder and harder and harder just to get by. And more of those ladders of opportunity into the middle class have been taken away.

And as I said at the State of the Union, our job, our generational task is to reverse those trends and get back to a point where our economy is growing in a broad-based way, an economy in which everybody feels the benefits, an economy in which everybody feels more secure. That's what we're fighting for. That's what we're fighting for.

And so I put forward then what we called an opportunity agenda. And it's pretty simple; we can break it down into four component parts. Number one, more good jobs that pay a good wage, because we know that work is not just a matter of a paycheck, it also gives people a sense of purpose and dignity and shape to their lives. Number two, making sure that everybody who doesn't have a job is trained in the skills they need to get those good jobs. Number three, a world-class education for every child in America; not just some, but every child in America. And number four, that work pays, so that if you're working full time, you're not in poverty; so that you're bringing home enough to cover your bills; that you have some semblance of security; that you have some savings that you can retire on; so that you've got health care that you can count on.

Now, what I've also said is, look, I want to work with Congress wherever possible. [*Laughter*] Now, folks shouldn't laugh at that. There are a lot of folks in Congress who I think want to get some stuff done, but unfortunately, not enough to break through some of this gridlock. We're going to see this year, an election year, whether they can move forward on some of these priorities. But what I also said is this is going to be a year of action, so I'm not going to wait. Where Congress does not act and I've got a chance to help middle class Americans and folks trying to get in the middle class, we're going to go ahead and act without them.

And over the past 4 weeks, we've tried to show what that means, because we've moved on all four areas of this opportunity agenda.

[*At this point, the President sneezed.*]

Audience members. Bless you!

The President. I've been working so hard I might be getting a cold. [*Laughter*] I actually think I'm okay. I'm just—[*laughter*].

Audience member. Get covered! [*Laughter*]

The President. Got to get covered. That's right. Got to get covered. [*Laughter*]

So just I'll give you a couple of examples. We've launched new hubs to help bring 21st-century manufacturing jobs back to America, to our shores. We ordered reforms in our job training system so that folks are being trained for jobs that actually exist and so that when you get trained, you know that there's a job out there for you.

We rallied business leaders to help make sure that there's the fastest possible broadband in every classroom in America. And we've already gotten that started with billions of dollars in commitments that are going to be going into classrooms. And we're going to help teachers so that they're trained to help these students take advantage of these new technologies.

I signed, as many of you know, an Executive order saying that if you want a contract with the Federal Government, you've got to pay your workers $10.10 an hour. They deserve fair pay.

So we've made some progress, but we've got more to do. And as usual, I need your help. You guys are going to be the key to helping to drive some of this agenda not just next month, not just over the next 6 months, but over the course of this year. Because we want to be able to look back and say we've made some progress on this opportunity agenda.

So let me just talk to you about what I really want you to focus on. Number one, let's make sure we're giving America a raise. [*Applause*] Let's make sure we're giving America a raise. One thing that Americans across the board agree on is, if you work full time in the wealthiest nation on Earth, you shouldn't be in poverty. You shouldn't be in poverty. And in the year since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, six States have gone ahead and raised theirs. More are working on it. I just met with the Governors this past weekend. You've got a whole bunch of Governors who are saying we need to raise this minimum wage.

In my State of the Union Address, I called on business leaders to start raising their minimum wage. And last week, the Gap announced that it was going to raise its base wage for 65,000 of its employees, which was good news, obviously, for them. This should not be hard to do.

Three-quarters of Americans support raising the minimum wage. Not just Democrats: Independents, Republicans support raising the minimum wage. Unfortunately, so far we have seen Republicans in Congress not even want to vote on it, even though the current proposal would potentially provide more income for 16 million Americans.

Now, I know that OFA volunteers from coast to coast held a day of action last week to let people know it makes no sense to block a vote on raising the minimum wage, telling people how to fight back. This is really important. Three-quarters of your neighbors, your friends, your coworkers agree with us on this. We just have to get them activated.

It doesn't involve a big, new Government program. It doesn't involve a big, new bureaucracy. It doesn't involve new Federal spending. All it involves is Congress taking a vote, and three-quarters of the American people say it's the right thing to do. And it won't just be good for those families, it will be good for our economy as a whole, because when ordinary families have more money in their pockets, they go out and spend it. And when they go out and spend it, that means business has more customers, and that means more profits, and that means they can hire more workers. And the whole economy starts going up.

So this is good for our economy, and it's good for everybody. But I'm going to need all of you to keep on pushing on that front.

The second thing: I could not be prouder of the work that you've done to help America get covered. Joshua told you his story. He is an example that is duplicated all across the country.

Because of you, we now have 4 million Americans who have signed up for quality, private health insurance through the marketplace exchanges. Four million people have already signed up because of you—4 million. [*Applause*] Four million, 4 million. That's on top of the 3 million young people who have been able to get coverage by staying on their parent's plan, and on top of the millions of Americans who are signing up to get Medicaid for the first time.

So you've already, because of the work that you've done, made sure that people all across America are getting better coverage. And that is also in addition to the seniors who have gotten discounts on their prescription drugs because we've closed the doughnut hole, and all the people who already had health insurance, but now don't have to face lifetime limits now aren't going to be—because of some fine print—left out in the lurch when they actually need their health insurance. It doesn't count all the preventive care that's suddenly available to everybody.

And those things are making a difference in people's lives right now, and you've done that. But we've got more work to do. The fact is, is that we want everybody covered, not just some. That was always the intention, and everybody now has the opportunity to get covered. But let's face it, a combination of a implacable opposition that has spent hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions of dollars, spreading misinformation on this plan, you combine that with, let's face it, the website didn't work for the first month, and all those things combined mean that a lot of people who really could use this coverage are still unsure or dissuaded or haven't checked it out for themselves.

And we've got to make sure that they know that this will pay off for them; that the majority of people out there, if they actually check their plans, when you combine it with the tax credits, can get health insurance for a hundred dollars or even less, in some cases, less than the cost of their cell phone bill or their cable bill. And they'll have that security, that peace of mind. It means women can't be charged more than men just because they're women. It means that if you've got a preexisting condition, you don't have to worry about being able to get coverage if you lose your job anymore.

So everybody here has got a story. A lot of you, you got involved in the first place because of this health care issue, a lot of you are—because I know. I was—I met you on the campaign trail in some cases, and you came up and told me about a story of how painful and difficult an illness in the family had been and not knowing how you were going to pay for coverage, how you were going to pay for the care for a loved one.

So you all know this, and you can tell these stories in ways that are outside of politics. Politicians, if they're talking here in Washington, people discount them. I'll just be honest with you. People, they just assume, you know what, everybody is just yacking and trying to win an election. And so that's why misinformation can thrive.

But when they hear from their friends and their neighbors and their coworkers like you and you're able to say, hey, here, check it out, take a look on the website—if you reach out to your Republican friend who can't stand Obama, but is basically a nice person and they just—[*laughter*]—but they watch the wrong newscast or—[*laughter*]. You all know those folks. I mean, some uncle or cousin, you love them to death, but they come in with all this information that's just wrong, and you're shaking your head, but you decide you don't want to get in an argument with them because you haven't seen them in a while and you miss them. [*Laughter*] Right? Everybody has got those folks. You know them.

So if you're able to reach out to them, and you just say, hey, take a look, here, here, let's get on the website. There's the price. There's the plan. Here's the tax credit. Here's what it will cost for you. Come on, Uncle Joe, I know you don't have health insurance. You may not like the President, but this really is a good deal. [*Laughter*] They'll listen to you, right?

And then there are some folks actually who do like me, but they just don't know. [*Laughter*] Because they're not paying attention.

Because they're on one of the other channels that has "Real Housewives" or something. [*Laughter*] They really don't know that there's this health care plan out there.

So what you need to do is to continue what you're doing and reach out with your teams in your respective cities, States, towns, counties, because right now we've only got a few weeks left. March 31, that's the last call. If folks aren't signed up by March 31, they can't sign up again until the next open enrollment period with the 2015 rates. So if they want health insurance now, they need to sign up now. And we're going to make a big push these last few weeks. But as I said, I can talk, my team can talk here in Washington, it's not going to make as much of a difference as if you are out there making the case.

The work you're doing is God's work. It is hard work. You don't have the prerogative to just go around and say no to everything. You don't have the prerogative to just be cynical. You don't think that the country moves forward just on its own. You understand that it happens because ordinary people come together to do some extraordinary things. And let other people root for failure or refight the old battles. Our job is to make sure that this law works for everybody and to keep up the long fight to restore opportunity for all.

So let's get that minimum wage done and give America a raise. Let's get people signed up and make sure that everybody has coverage. Let's keep going on all the issues of equity and equal pay for equal work and making sure that families have security and that we're bringing jobs back to America and our kids are getting the education they need and that college is affordable. Let's keep working on these issues.

I never promised you it was going to be easy. I never did. And I always have to remind people that. [*Laughter*] Progress is hard. But progress is possible, and it's possible because of you. And that's why I couldn't be prouder of you. All right?

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:18 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Washington, DC, hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Joshua Crutchfield, graduate student, Middle Tennessee State University, who introduced the President, and his parents Eric and Barbara Crutchfield. He also referred to Executive Order 13658, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at an Organizing for Action Dinner
February 25, 2014

Well, it is good to see all of you. And I've had a chance to hug you and catch up. So now it's all business. [*Laughter*]

Let me start by thanking Jim Messina and Jon Carson and all the OFA staff for the great work that they do each and every day. I've gotten a lot of compliments from a lot of you about the quality of the OFA staff, and I actually concur that they are terrific and passionate about the work that we're doing out there.

I just had a chance to talk to some of the leaders from States and communities all across the country who are pounding the pavement and talking to their neighbors and talking to their friends. And the levels of enthusiasm and energy that they projected was inspiring, and it really reminds me of why what I do in the White House matters. Because I've got folks like that out on the ground, out in communities every single day that are counting on me to give voice to the incredible work that they're doing, but also the values that they represent.

And I want to thank all of you. As I look around the room, I would not be President if it were not for this room. And there are a lot of people here who are new friends, but there are also some folks here who supported me way back in the day when I had no gray hair and I didn't wear a tie. [*Laughter*] Somebody just showed me a picture the other day, and I looked really young. [*Laughter*]

Most of this is just going to be a conversation. I want to spend time on questions and an-

swers and dialogue and discussion. But let me just make a couple of quick comments.

Number one, as I said at the State of the Union Address, I genuinely think this year can be a breakout year for America. We have now really consolidated the recovery. If you look at the statistics—8.5 million new jobs, unemployment rate the lowest it's been since before I was elected; you've got manufacturing coming back; we've made progress on energy, fuel efficiency, carbon emissions reductions; making steady progress in terms of reforming our education system—we're actually poised to make the 21st century the American century, just like the 20th century was.

And Alan Solomont is over here nodding his head. Alan was representing the United States and did an outstanding job in Spain. And one of the remarkable things that I think he will affirm is that everybody outside of the United States actually thinks that we're doing a remarkable job, that our economic growth is the envy of most of the developed world. And yet that's not always reflected in people's moods here in the States.

And there's a reason for that. Our growth has been uneven. Those of us at the very top have disproportionately benefited from productivity gains, technology, globalization. Middle class families, working class families still feel like they're struggling every single day to get by. And the ladders of opportunity for folks who want to work their way into the middle class are not as robust as they used to be. And so, even in the midst of recovery, there's still a lot of anxiety out there.

And what I said in the State of the Union was that we have to be focused like a laser on building back up an opportunity society in which everybody feels like if they work hard and if they're responsible, they can get ahead. And that means more jobs. That means making sure people are trained for the jobs that are out there. It means making sure kids get a world-class education. It means that work pays and that not only are they getting a decent paycheck that can support their families, but that they've got retirement security and health care security and all the things that give them a stable platform to live their lives and make sure their kids succeed. So we're doing that.

And I've also said that Congress may not be willing to break gridlock during a Presidential year. I'm going to look for every opportunity to work with them. But if they're not, we're just going to go ahead and do some work.

So just one example: Today at the White House, we announced two more advanced manufacturing hubs, one in Detroit and one in Chicago, where we are going to take cutting-edge research that's being done on advanced metallurgy and digital technology, and consortiums of universities and businesses are coming together to bring jobs back to the United States of America, attract investment. And we didn't have to do that with some legislation, although there is some legislation pending in Congress that could expand it.

We did the same thing to make sure Federal contractors are paying their employees $10.10 an hour. We're doing the same thing when it comes to making sure that we've got high-speed broadband in every classroom in America. I already have a commitment that's going to mean millions of students, about 20 million students, 15,000 schools across America, are going to be wired for broadband. We're doing that in conjunction with the FCC and the private sector. And so we're just going to keep on looking for ways in which we can realize the values that we've been fighting for, for a long time.

But as all of you know because you were involved in 2008 or 2012, it doesn't work if we don't have folks on the ground who are speaking out on behalf of these issues and these values. Politics has become so toxic and information is so contested and people are separated from how they get news, that oftentimes to break through, what's necessary is the validation of a neighbor or a friend or a coworker or a family member. And that's where OFA comes in, because it's able to, in very concrete terms, help to generate people's energy and mobilize their interest around these issues in ways that are not abstract, but are very concrete and very specific and that reach people where they live, at the kitchen table, and at the

water cooler at work. And that grassroots work that is done also then energizes me and informs the issues that we're going to try to lift up over the course of the next year.

So I just want to say to all of you, what you're doing is really important, and we really appreciate it. And you don't always—it's not always flashy. It's often at the ground level, but it makes a difference.

And one final example of that difference that's being made is when it comes to the Affordable Care Act. Obviously, nowhere has there been more misinformation, nowhere are just basic facts more contested. But as a consequence of some of the folks that have been doing this work on the ground, as of today, we've signed up more than 4 million people through the exchanges. That's 4 million people who have the security of health care, in many cases for the very first time. And that doesn't count the 3 million who are already able to get health insurance because they're staying on their parent's plan. That doesn't count the millions who have been able to sign up through Medicaid. And we're not done yet.

So when you've got grassroots folks who are committed and energized like they are, it makes a difference. And whatever issues you care about, whether it's climate change or women's reproductive health or foreign policy or education or access to higher education, having folks who are willing to fight for what they believe in connected to what we do here is really powerful and important. And they couldn't do it without you.

So I just wanted to say thank you to all of you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:19 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Washington, DC, hotel. In his remarks, he referred to James A. Messina, national chairman, and Jon Carson, executive director, Organizing for Action; and former U.S. Ambassador to Spain Alan D. Solomont.

Remarks in Saint Paul, Minnesota
February 26, 2014

The President. Hello, Saint Paul! Oh, it is good to be back in Minnesota.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. That's why I came here. It's great to see you.

Although, can I just say that when we got off the plane, Secretary Foxx, who is from North Carolina, turned to me, and he said, this is the coldest I've ever been in my life. [*Laughter*] Now, we were only out there for like a minute—[*laughter*]—which goes to show how soft these folks from North Carolina are when it comes to the weather. [*Laughter*] I, on the other hand, am from Chicago. I walked off those stairs, I was like, this is balmy, this is great. [*Laughter*] February in Minnesota, can't beat it. Cannot beat it.

Now, in addition to Secretary Foxx, who I want to—give him a big round of applause for that introduction. You've two champions for the people of Minnesota who are here today. You've got Representative Betty McCollum and Representative Keith Ellison. You've got your mayor, Chris Coleman, in the house. The new mayor of Minneapolis, Betsy Hodges, is here. And my great friend, who actually told me I was running for President before I knew I was running for President, R.T. Rybak. Love that name. Where's R.T.? He's around here somewhere.

Now, I want to thank everybody who showed me around Union Depot and gave me a preview of this new light-rail line. It is fantastic. And I also just want to say—even though he's not here today—I want to say to everybody how Michelle and I have been keeping in our thoughts and prayers one of the great Americans that we know, as well as a great Minnesotan, Walter Mondale.

Now, like millions of Americans, I've spent some time with Minnesotans lately—because I was watching the Olympics. [*Laughter*] Minnesota sent 19 athletes to the games. Now, that's tied for second most of any State, and they did us all proud. It is not shocking that Minnesotans might be pretty good at the Win-

ter Olympics. [*Laughter*] What is particularly interesting is that, once again, the tiny town of Warroad proved that it really is Hockeytown, U.S.A., thanks to T.J. Oshie and Gigi Marvin, who we're just so proud of. And T.J.'s shootout performance against the Russians, I must say, I enjoyed a lot. I tweeted at him about it.

So we've spent some time over the last few weeks on hockey, but I'm not here to talk about hockey. By the way, I cannot play hockey. [*Laughter*] I grew up in Hawaii. We do not have hockey in Hawaii. But I'm here to talk about what you're doing in the Twin Cities and how you're helping to create new jobs and new opportunities for every American.

We are at a moment when our economy is growing. Our businesses have created about 8½ million new jobs in the past 4 years. Unemployment is at the lowest it's been in over 5 years; in Minnesota, it's lower than it's been in 6½ years. And by the way, you've got a great Governor who I served with in the Senate, Mark Dayton, who is helping to make that happen.

So in a lot of ways, things are looking up. But in some ways, the trends that had been battering middle class families for a long time have gotten even starker, because those at the top are doing better than ever, while wages and incomes for a lot of families have barely budged. And too many families are working harder than ever just to keep up. So as I said at the State of the Union Address a few weeks back, our job is to reverse those trends. We've got to build an economy that works for everybody. We've got to restore opportunity for all people so that no matter who you are, where you come from, what you look like, you can get ahead if you work hard and you're responsible.

And so I laid out an opportunity agenda that has four parts. Number one, good jobs that pay good wages in manufacturing, in energy, in innovation, and infrastructure. Number two, train folks with the skills they need to get those good jobs, something that your Senator, Al Franken, is doing great work on every single day. He cares a lot about that job training issue. Number three, guaranteeing every child has access to a world-class education. And number four, making sure that hard work is rewarded with wages you can live on and savings you can retire on and health care you can count on. That's what we're fighting for.

Minnesota is helping to lead the way on these issues. Your State legislature is poised to raise your minimum wage this year. In my State of the Union Address, I called for a new women's economic agenda. It's actually a family economic agenda: equal pay for equal work, paid sick leave, and more. And there are leaders in your State legislature that are working hard at this because they know when women succeed, America succeeds.

So on all these issues, we're reaching out to Members of Congress, looking to see if they're willing to work with us on some of these priorities. But what I also said at the State of the Union is, in this year of action, whenever I can partner directly with States or cities or business leaders or civic leaders to act on this opportunity agenda, I'm going to go ahead and do it. We can't wait. We've got to move. We've got to get things going. Too many families are counting on it.

So yesterday I launched new hubs to attract 21st-century manufacturing jobs to America. And today I'm here to launch a new competition for 21st-century infrastructure and the jobs that come with it, because any opportunity agenda begins with creating more good jobs. And one of the fastest and best ways to create good jobs is by rebuilding America's infrastructure: our roads, our bridges, our rails, our ports, our airports, our schools, our power grids. We've got a lot of work to do out there, and we've got to put folks to work.

One of the most difficult things about the financial crisis we went through was the housing bubble bursting, and construction workers were hammered harder than just about anybody. And while we've cut the unemployment rate for construction workers almost in half since 2010, too many are still looking for jobs at a time when we've got so much that we could put them to work on rebuilding. We've got ports that aren't ready for the next generation of supertankers. We've got more than a

hundred thousand bridges that are old enough to qualify for Medicare. [*Laughter*]

Everybody knows—and nobody knows better than Minnesotans—when we've gone through a winter like this, roads are wrecked, full of potholes all across the country.

Now, other countries are not waiting to rebuild their infrastructure. They're trying to outbuild us today so they can outcompete us tomorrow. As a percentage of GDP, countries like China, Germany, they're spending about twice what we're spending in order to build infrastructure because they know that if they have the fastest trains on the planet or the highest rated airports or the busiest, most efficient ports, that businesses will go there.

But we don't want businesses to go there. We want them to come here to Minnesota. We want them to come here to the United States of America. And that means the best airports and the best roads and the best trains should be right here in America.

At a time when companies are saying they intend to hire more people this year, we need to make that decision easier for them. And we can create jobs at the same time, rebuilding our transportation systems, our power grids, our communications networks, all the things that commerce relies on and that help get workers to those jobs.

So the bottom line is, there's work to be done, workers ready to do it. Rebuilding our infrastructure is vital to business. It creates good-paying jobs that, by the way, cannot be outsourced. This is one of Congress's major responsibilities: helping States and cities fund new infrastructure projects.

And the reason—part of the reason I'm focused on this is, Congress has an important deadline coming up. If Congress doesn't finish a transportation bill by the end of the summer, we could see construction projects stop in their tracks, machines sitting idle, workers off the job.

So next week, I'm going to send Congress a budget that funds rebuilding our transportation infrastructure in a more responsible way, by doing it over 4 years, which gives cities and States and private investors the certainty they need to plan major projects. Projects like repairing essential highways and bridges, building new transit systems in fast-growing cities and communities so folks who live there can get to work and school every day and spend less time sitting in traffic. And we're going to have to construct smarter, more resilient transportation systems that can withstand the worst impacts of climate change, like bigger surges of water that we've seen in recent floods.

So all told, my transportation budget will support millions of jobs nationwide. And we'll pay for these investments in part by simplifying the Tax Code. We're going to close wasteful tax loopholes, lower tax rates for businesses that create jobs here at home, stop rewarding companies for sending jobs to other countries, use the money we save for—in this transition to create good jobs with good wages rebuilding America. It makes sense. [*Applause*] It makes sense.

Now, I'll be honest with you, there are leaders in both parties who are willing to reach across the aisle in Congress when it comes to American infrastructure. They know how important it is. And infrastructure didn't use to be a partisan issue; it shouldn't be Democrat or Republican. Everybody uses roads, everybody uses ports, airports. Unfortunately, time and again over the past few years, there have been some Republicans in Congress who have refused to act on commonsense proposals that will create jobs and grow our economy. Partly, it's not that they're—I guess, they don't like roads, they just don't want to pay for them. It doesn't work that way. You've got to come up with a way to get these projects going.

So while Congress is deciding what it's going to do next, I'm just going to go ahead and do what I can to create more good jobs. And that's why I came here to Saint Paul. [*Applause*] That's why I came here to Saint Paul.

Because this project symbolizes what's possible. Union Depot was renovated and expanded with the help of what we call TIGER grants. These are competitive grants that we created as part of the Recovery Act, also known as the stimulus, which actually worked, despite what everybody claims. So the idea is, if a city or

State comes up with a plan to modernize transportation infrastructure that will have a significant impact on economic activity and if they line up other sources of funding to help pay for it, they can win a TIGER grant and the Federal Government becomes a partner with these local communities.

So far, these grants have given a boost to 270 infrastructure projects across all 50 States. And you heard Secretary Foxx talk about—these grants are helping cities like L.A. and States like North Carolina, and they helped you rebuild this depot into a hub that will bring different modes of transportation together under one roof instead of scattered across the city. Amtrak is going to be here. The new Metro Green Line will be here. Bus lines will be here.

And I just had a chance to take a look at some of those spiffy new trains. [*Laughter*] They are nice. They—and they're energy efficient. They're going to be reliable. You can get from one downtown to the other in a little over 30 minutes instead of when it's snowing being in traffic for 2 hours. The trains were made in California, which meant folks were put to work here in the United States building them.

And here's the best part of it: Not only have you made a more efficient transportation system, cutting down commutes, saving on gas, reducing carbon pollution, but this depot has also helped to boost economic development in Lowertown Saint Paul. Just across the street, the old downtown post office building is becoming apartments and shops. All told, more than 4,000 jobs were created for this project. And we're seeing businesses crop up and new development crop up all along the line.

So everybody is winning. And in part because of some flexibility that we showed during the planning process, the line is also going to stop in some poor neighborhoods that oftentimes have difficulty getting to the places where there are jobs. So it's going to help folks who are willing to work hard, try getting to the middle class, it helps them get access—helps people get access to opportunity that, up until this point, had a tough time.

So we know this works. Today we're kicking off the next round of competition for TIGER grants. Mayors and Governors, city councils, State legislatures, all of you who are watching here today: If you've got a great idea for your city or your State, then let us know your plan. If it will encourage economic activity and support local businesses and help put people to work, then your country is interested in partnering with you.

And TIGER grants aren't the only way that we can help cities like Saint Paul and Minneapolis rebuild their infrastructure. You've got—Federal funding helped to build the Green Line; that's going to make it easier than ever to travel between the two cities. You've got more than 5,000 construction workers from all over Minnesota helping to build it. Nearly 200 police officers, train operators, maintenance workers are being hired. And that's not counting all the jobs that are being created from the offices and the apartment buildings that are going to be built along the line. Because the trains stopped at neighborhoods that have access to public transportation, those folks are going to work. And all of this can be duplicated all across the country.

But unfortunately, funding for these projects are going to be in jeopardy unless Congress passes this new transportation bill. So I want everybody to understand. Now, the good news is, Keith Ellison, Betty, they're already on board. They know this needs to happen. Al Franken, all over it. Some Democrats and Republicans are already working together to make sure transportation doesn't—funding doesn't run out. And we're seeing some glimmers of hope, because this new round of TIGER grants was the result of bipartisan cooperation. That's what needs to happen when we work together.

But we're going to need your voices telling a story around the country about why this is so important. Roads and bridges should not be a partisan issue. More Americans should have access to the kind of efficient, affordable transit you're going to have with the Green Line. There's no faster way or better way for Congress to create jobs right now and to grow our economy right now and have a positive impact on our economy for decades than if we start

more projects and finish more projects like this one.

Let's create more good jobs, build smarter schools, better airports, faster railways, better broadband networks. Let's educate our kids and our workers better. Let's rebuild an economy where everybody who is willing to work hard has a chance to get ahead.

This is the beginning, not the end. We've got a lot more rail we've got to lay. We've got a lot more roads we've got to travel. Let's get going, Minnesota.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. at Union Depot. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor R.T. Rybak, Jr., of Minneapolis, MN; former Vice President Walter F. Mondale; Leif "T.J." Oshie, forward, National Hockey League's St. Louis Blues, in his capacity as member of the 2014 U.S. men's hockey team; and Gisèle "Gigi" Marvin, defenseman, 2014 U.S. women's hockey team.

Remarks on the My Brother's Keeper Initiative
February 27, 2014

The President. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, good afternoon, everybody.

Audience members. Good afternoon.

The President. Welcome to the White House. And thank you, Christian, for that outstanding introduction. And thank you for cheering for the White Sox, which is the right thing to do. [*Laughter*] Like your parents and your teachers, I could not be prouder of you. I could not be prouder of the other young men who are here today. But just so we're clear, you're only excused for 1 day of school. [*Laughter*] And I'm assuming you've got your assignments with you so that you can catch up, perhaps even on the flight back. [*Laughter*]

As Christian mentioned, I first met Christian about a year ago. I visited the Hyde Park Academy in Chicago, which is only about a mile from my house. And Christian was part of this program called Becoming a Man. It was a program that Mayor Rahm Emanuel introduced to me. And it helps young men who show a lot of potential, but may have gotten in some trouble to stay on the right path.

They get help with schoolwork, but they also learn life skills like how to be a responsible citizen and how to deal with life's challenges and how to manage frustrations in a constructive way and how to set goals for themselves. And it works. One study found that, among young men who participate in the B.A.M. program, arrests for violent crimes dropped 44 percent, and they were more likely to graduate from high school.

So as Christian mentioned, during my visit, they're in a circle, and I sat down in the circle, and we went around, led by their counselor, and guys talked about their lives, talked about their stories. They talked about what they were struggling with and how they were trying to do the right thing and how sometimes they didn't always do the right thing. And when it was my turn, I explained to them that when I was their age, I was a lot like them. I didn't have a dad in the house. And I was angry about it, even though I didn't necessarily realize it at the time. I made bad choices. I got high without always thinking about the harm that it could do. I didn't always take school as seriously as I should have. I made excuses. Sometimes, I sold myself short.

And I remember when I was saying this—Christian, you may remember this—after I was finished, the guy sitting next to me said, "Are you talking about you?" [*Laughter*] I said, "Yes."

And the point was, I could see myself in these young men. And the only difference is that I grew up in an environment that was a little bit more forgiving, so when I made a mistake, the consequences were not as severe. I had people who encouraged me—not just my mom and grandparents, but wonderful teachers and community leaders—and they'd push me to work hard and study hard and make the

most of myself. And if I didn't listen, they said it again. And if I didn't listen, they said it a third time. And they would give me second chances and third chances. They never gave up on me, and so I didn't give up on myself.

I told these young men my story then, and I repeat it now, because I firmly believe that every child deserves the same chances that I had. And that's why we're here today: to do what we can, in this year of action, to give more young Americans the support they need to make good choices and to be resilient and to overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams.

And this is an issue of national importance. It's as important as any issue that I work on. It's an issue that goes to the very heart of why I ran for President. Because if America stands for anything, it stands for the idea of opportunity for everybody, the notion that no matter who you are or where you came from or the circumstances into which you are born, if you work hard, if you take responsibility, then you can make it in this country. That's the core idea.

And that's the idea behind everything that I'll do this year and for the rest of my Presidency. Because at a time when the economy is growing, we've got to make sure that every American shares in that growth, not just a few. And that means guaranteeing every child in America has access to a world-class education. It means creating more jobs and empowering more workers with the skills they need to do those jobs. It means making sure that hard work pays off with wages you can live on and savings you can retire on and health care that you can count on. It means building more ladders of opportunity into the middle class for anybody who's willing to work hard to climb them.

Those are national issues. They have an impact on everybody. And the problem of stagnant wages and economic insecurity and stalled mobility are issues that affect all demographic groups all across the country. My administration's policies—from early childhood education to job training to minimum wages—are designed to give a hand up to everybody, every child, every American willing to work hard and take responsibility for their own success. That's the larger agenda.

But the plain fact is, there are some Americans who, in the aggregate, are consistently doing worse in our society: groups that have had the odds stacked against them in unique ways that require unique solutions, groups who've seen fewer opportunities that have spanned generations. And by almost every measure, the group that is facing some of the most severe challenges in the 21st century in this country are boys and young men of color.

Now, to say this is not to deny the enormous strides we've made in closing the opportunity gaps that marred our history for so long. My presence is a testimony to that progress. Across this country, in government, in business, in our military, in communities in every State, we see extraordinary examples of African American and Latino men who are standing tall and leading and building businesses and making our country strong. Some of those role models who have defied the odds are with us here today: the Magic Johnsons or the Colin Powells, who are doing extraordinary things; the Anthony Foxxes.

Anthony, yesterday he and I were talking about how both of us never knew our dads and shared that sense of both how hard that had been, but also how that had driven us to succeed in many ways. So there are examples of extraordinary achievement. We all know that. We don't need to stereotype and pretend that there's only dysfunction out there. But 50 years after Dr. King talked about his dream for America's children, the stubborn fact is that the life chances of the average Black or Brown child in this country lags behind by almost every measure, and it's worse for boys and young men.

If you're African American, there's about a one-in-two chance you grow up without a father in your house—one in two. If you're Latino, you have about a one-in-four chance. We know that boys who grow up without a father are more likely to be poor, more likely to underperform in school.

As a Black student, you are far less likely than a White student to be able to read

proficiently by the time you are in fourth grade. By the time you reach high school, you're far more likely to have been suspended or expelled. There's a higher chance you end up in the criminal justice system and a far higher chance that you are the victim of a violent crime. Fewer young Black and Latino men participate in the labor force compared to young White men. And all of this translates into higher unemployment rates and poverty rates as adults.

And the worst part is, we've become numb to these statistics. We're not surprised by them. We take them as the norm. We just assume this is an inevitable part of American life, instead of the outrage that it is. That's how we think about it. It's like a cultural backdrop for us, in movies and television. We just assume, of course, it's going to be like that. But these statistics should break our hearts. And they should compel us to act.

Michelle and I are blessed with two beautiful daughters. We don't have a son. But I know if I had a son, on the day he was born, I would have felt everything I felt with Malia and Sasha: the awe, the gratitude, the overwhelming sense of responsibility to do everything in my power to protect that amazing new life from this big world out there. And just as our daughters are growing up into wonderful, beautiful young women, I'd want my son to feel a sense of boundless possibility. I'd want him to have independence and confidence, and I'd want him to have empathy and compassion. I'd want him to have a sense of diligence and commitment and a respect for others and himself, the tools that he'd need to succeed.

I don't have a son, but as parents, that's what we should want not just for our children, but for all children. And I believe the continuing struggles of so many boys and young men—the fact that too many of them are falling by the wayside, dropping out, unemployed, involved in negative behavior, going to jail, being profiled—this is a moral issue for our country.

It's also an economic issue for our country. After all, these boys are a growing segment of our population. They are our future workforce. When, generation after generation, they lag behind, our economy suffers. Our family structure suffers. Our civic life suffers. Cycles of hopelessness breed violence and mistrust. And our country is a little less than what we know it can be. So we need to change the statistics, not just for the sake of the young men and boys, but for the sake of America's future.

And that's why, in the aftermath of the Trayvon Martin verdict, with all the emotions and controversy that it sparked, I spoke about the need to bolster and reinforce our young men and give them the sense that their country cares about them and values them and is willing to invest in them. And I'm grateful that Trayvon's parents Sybrina and Tracey are here with us today, along with Jordan Davis's parents Lucia and Ron.

In my State of the Union Address last month, I said I'd pick up the phone and reach out to Americans willing to help more young men of color facing especially tough odds to stay on track and reach their full potential so America can reach its full potential. That's what today is all about.

After months of conversation with a wide range of people, we've pulled together private philanthropies and businesses, mayors, State and local leaders, faith leaders, nonprofits, all who are committed to creating more pathways to success. And we're committed to building on what works. And we call it "My Brother's Keeper."

Now, just to be clear, "My Brother's Keeper" is not some big, new Government program. In my State of the Union Address, I outlined the work that needs to be done for broad-based economic growth and opportunity for all Americans: manufacturing hubs, infrastructure spending. I've been traveling around the country for the last several weeks talking about what we need to do to grow the economy and expand opportunity for everybody. And in the absence of some of those macroeconomic policies that create more good jobs and restore middle class security, it's going to be harder for everyone to make progress. And for the last 4 years, we've been working through initiatives like Promise Zones to help break down the structural barriers—from lack of transporta-

tion to substandard schools—that afflict some of this country's most impoverished counties, and we'll continue to promote these efforts in urban and rural counties alike.

So those are all Government initiatives, Government programs that we think are good for all Americans, and we're going to keep on pushing for them. But what we're talking about here today with "My Brother's Keeper" is a more focused effort on boys and young men of color who are having a particularly tough time. And in this effort, Government cannot play the only—or even the primary—role. We can help give every child access to quality preschool and help them start learning from an early age, but we can't replace the power of a parent who's reading to that child. We can reform our criminal justice system to ensure that it's not infected with bias, but nothing keeps a young man out of trouble like a father who takes an active role in his son's life.

In other words, broadening the horizons for our young men and giving them the tools they need to succeed will require a sustained effort from all of us. Parents will have to parent and turn off the television and help with homework. Teachers will need to do their part to make sure our kids don't fall behind and that we're setting high expectations for those children and not giving up on them. Business leaders will need to create more mentorships and apprenticeships to show more young people what careers are out there. Tech leaders will need to open young eyes to fields like computer science and engineering. Faith leaders will need to help our young men develop the values and ethical framework that is the foundation for a good and productive life.

So we all have a job to do. And we can do it together: Black and White, urban and rural, Democrat and Republican. So often, the issues facing boys and young men of color get caught up in long-running ideological arguments about race and class and crime and poverty, the role of government, partisan politics. We've all heard those arguments before. But the urgency of the situation requires us to move past some of those old arguments and focus on getting something done and focusing on what works. It doesn't mean the arguments are unimportant, it just means that they can't paralyze us. And there's enough good will and enough overlap and agreement that we should be able to go ahead and get some things done, without resolving everything about our history or our future.

Twenty years ago, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson started a program in the Miami public school system—you don't, well, feel free to stand up—[*applause*]—to help young boys at risk of dropping out of school. Today, it serves thousands of students in dozens of schools.

As mayor of New York, Mayor Bloomberg, Michael Bloomberg, who's here today, started a Young Men's Initiative for African American and Latino boys because he understood that in order for America to compete, we need to make it easier for all our young people to do better in the classroom and find a job once they graduate.

A bipartisan group of mayors called Cities United has made this issue a priority in communities across the country. Senator Mike Lee, a leader of the Tea Party, has been working with Senator Dick Durbin, a Democrat from my home State of Illinois, to reduce disparities in our criminal justice system that have hit the African American and Latino communities especially hard.

So I want to thank everybody who's been doing incredible work, many of the people who are here today, including Members of Congress, who have been focused on this and are moving the needle in their communities and around the country.

They understand that giving every young person who's willing to work hard a shot at opportunity should not be a partisan issue. Yes, we need to train our workers, invest in our schools, make college more affordable, and government has a role to play. And yes, we need to encourage fathers to stick around and remove the barriers to marriage and talk openly about things like responsibility and faith and community. In the words of Dr. King, it is not either-or, it is both-and.

And if I can persuade Sharpton and O'Reilly to be in the same meeting—[*laughter*]—then

it means that there are people of good faith who want to get some stuff done, even if we don't agree on everything. And that's our focus.

While there may not be much of an appetite in Congress for sweeping new programs or major new initiatives right now, we all know we can't wait. And so the good news is, folks in the private sector who know how important boosting the achievement of young men of color is to this country, they are ready to step up.

Today I'm pleased to announce that some of the most forward-looking foundations in America are looking to invest at least $200 million over the next 5 years—on top of the $150 million that they've already invested—to test which strategies are working for our kids and expand them in cities across the country.

Many of these folks have been on the frontlines in this fight for a long time. What's more, they're joined by business leaders, corporate leaders, entrepreneurs who are stepping forward to support this effort as well. And my administration is going to do its part. So today, after my remarks are done, I'm going to pen this Presidential memorandum directing the Federal Government not to spend more money, but to do things smarter, to determine what we can do right now to improve the odds for boys and young mens of color and make sure our agencies are working more effectively with each other, with those businesses, with those philanthropies, and with local communities to implement proven solutions.

And part of what makes this initiative so promising is that we actually know what works and we know when it works. Now, what do I mean by that? Over the years, we've identified key moments in the life of a boy or a young man of color that will, more often than not, determine whether he succeeds or falls through the cracks. We know this—we know the data. We know the statistics. And if we can focus on those key moments, those life-changing points in their lives, you can have a big impact, you can boost the odds for more of our kids.

First of all, we know that during the first 3 years of life, a child born into a low-income family hears 30 million fewer words than a child born into a well-off family. And everybody knows babies are sponges, they just soak that up. A 30-million-word deficit is hard to make up. And if a Black or Latino kid isn't ready for kindergarten, he's half as likely to finish middle school with strong academic and social skills. So by giving more of our kids access to a high-quality early education and by helping parents get the tools they need to help their children succeed, we can give more kids a better shot at the career they're capable of and the life that will make us all better off. So that's point number one, right at the beginning.

Point number two, if a child can't read well by the time he's in third grade, he's four times less likely to graduate from high school by age 19 than one who can. And if he happens to be poor, he's six times less likely to graduate. So by boosting reading levels, we can help more of our kids make the grade, keep on advancing, reach that day that so many parents dream of—until it comes close, and then you start tearing up—and that's when they're walking across the stage, holding that high school diploma.

Number three, we know that Latino kids are almost twice as likely as White kids to be suspended from school. Black kids are nearly four times as likely. And if a student has been suspended even once by the time they're in ninth grade, they are twice as likely to drop out.

And that's why my administration has been working with schools on alternatives to the so-called zero-tolerance guidelines, not because teachers or administrators or fellow students should have to put up with bad behavior, but because there are ways to modify bad behavior that lead to good behavior, as opposed to bad behavior out of school. We can make classrooms good places for learning for everybody without jeopardizing a child's future. And by building on that work, we can keep more of our young men where they belong: in the classroom, learning, growing, gaining the skills they need to succeed.

Number four, we know that students of color are far more likely than their White classmates to find themselves in trouble with the law. If a student gets arrested, he's almost

twice as likely to drop out of school. By making sure our criminal justice system doesn't just function as a pipeline for underfunded schools to overcrowded jails, we can help young men of color stay out of prison, stay out of jail. And that means, then, they're more likely to be employable and to invest in their own families and to pass on a legacy of love and hope.

And finally, we know young Black men are twice as likely as young White men to be disconnected: not in school, not working. We've got to reconnect them. We've got to give more of these young men access to mentors. We've got to continue to encourage responsible fatherhood. We've got to provide more pathways to apply to college or find a job. We can keep them from falling through the cracks and help them lay a foundation for a career and a family and a better life.

In the discussion before we came in, General Powell talked about the fact that there are going to be some kids who just don't have a family at home that is functional, no matter how hard we try. But just an adult—any adult—who's paying attention can make a difference. Any adult who cares can make a difference.

Magic was talking about being at a school in Chicago, and rather than going to the school, he brought the school to the company, Allstate, that was doing the work. And suddenly, just that one conversation meant these young men saw something different. A world opened up for them. It doesn't take that much. But it takes more than we're doing now.

And that's what "My Brother's Keeper" is all about: helping more of our young people stay on track, providing the support they need to think more broadly about their future, building on what works, when it works, in those critical life-changing moments. And when I say, by the way, building on what works, it means looking at the actual evidence of what works. There are a lot of programs out there that sound good, are well intentioned, well inspired, but they're not actually having an impact. And we don't have enough money or time or resources to invest in things that don't work, so we've got to be pretty hardheaded about saying if something is not working, let's stop doing it. Let's do things that work. And we shouldn't care whether it was a Democratic program or a Republican program or a faith-based program or—if it works, we should support it. If it doesn't, we shouldn't. And all the time recognizing that my neighbor's child is my child, that each of us has an obligation to give every child the same chance this country gave so many of us.

So in closing, let me just say this. None of this is going to be easy. This is not a 1-year proposition. It's not a 2-year proposition. It's going to take time. We're dealing with complicated issues that run deep in our history, run deep in our society, and are entrenched in our minds. And addressing these issues will have to be a two-way bargain. Because no matter how much the community chips in, it's ultimately going to be up to these young men and all the young men who are out there to step up and seize responsibility for their own lives.

And that's why I want to close by speaking directly to the young men who are here today and all the boys and young men who are watching at home. Part of my message, part of our message in this initiative is, "No excuses." And government and private sector and philanthropy and all the faith communities, we all have a responsibility to help provide you the tools you need. We've got to help you knock down some of the barriers that you experience. That's what we're here for. But you've got responsibilities too.

And I know you can meet the challenge—many of you already are—if you make the effort. It may be hard, but you will have to reject the cynicism that says the circumstances of your birth or society's lingering injustices necessarily define you and your future. It will take courage, but you will have to tune out the naysayers who say that the deck is stacked against you, you might as well just give up or settle into the stereotype.

It's not going to happen overnight, but you're going to have to set goals, and you're going to have to work for those goals. Nothing will be given to you. The world is tough out there; there's a lot of competition for jobs and college positions. And everybody has to work

hard. But I know you guys can succeed. We've got young men up here who are starting to make those good choices because somebody stepped in and gave them a sense of how they might go about it.

And I know it can work because of men like Maurice Owens, who's here today. I want to tell Moe's story just real quick. When Moe was 4 years old, he moved with his mom Chauvet from South Carolina to the Bronx. Now, his mom didn't have a lot of money, and they lived in a tough neighborhood. Crime was high. A lot of young men ended up in jail or worse. But she knew the importance of education, so she got Moe into the best elementary school that she could find. And every morning, she put him on a bus; every night, she welcomed him when he came home.

She took the initiative; she eventually found a sponsorship program that allowed Moe to attend a good high school. And while many of his friends got into trouble, some of it pretty serious, Moe just kept on getting on the bus and kept on working hard and reaching for something better. And he had some adults in his life that were willing to give him advice and help him along the way. And he ended up going to college. And he ended up serving his country in the Air Force. And today, Moe works in the White House, just two door down from the Oval Office, as the Special Assistant to my Chief of Staff. And Moe never misses a chance to tell kids who grew up just like he did that if he can make it, they can too.

Moe and his mom are here today, so I want to thank them both for this incredible experience. Stand up, Moe, and show off your mom there. [*Applause*] Good job, Moe. So Moe didn't make excuses. His mom had high expectations. America needs more citizens like Moe. We need more young men like Christian. We will beat the odds. We need to give every child, no matter what they look like, where they live, the chance to reach their full potential. Because if we do—if we help these wonderful young men become better husbands and fathers and well-educated, hard-working, good citizens—then not only will they contribute to the growth and prosperity of this country, but they will pass on those lessons on to their children, on to their grandchildren. We'll start a different cycle. And this country will be richer and stronger for it for generations to come.

So let's get going. Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

[*At this point, the President signed the memorandum on creating and expanding ladders of opportunity for boys and young men of color.*]

The President. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:43 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Christian Champagne, student, Hyde Park Academy High School in Chicago, IL; Mayor Rahm I. Emanuel of Chicago, IL; Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Jr., former guard, National Basketball Association's Los Angeles Lakers; former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; Tracey Martin and Sybrina Fulton, parents of Trayvon Martin, who was killed in Sanford, FL, on February 26, 2012; Lucia McBath and Ronald Davis, parents of Jordan R. Davis, who was killed in Jacksonville, FL, on November 23, 2012; Rep. Frederica S. Wilson, in her former capacity as member of the Miami-Dade County School Board; former Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City; civil rights activist Alfred C. Sharpton, Jr.; Bill O'Reilly, host, Fox News Channel's "The O'Reilly Factor" program; and Chauvet Wells, mother of Maurice Owens, Special Assistant to the White House Chief of Staff. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Representative Edward L. Pastor's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
February 27, 2014

The first in his family to graduate from college and the first Hispanic Congressman ever elected from Arizona, Ed Pastor has spent his life fighting to give every American the same chance to work hard and get ahead that this country gave him. Ed has devoted his 23 years in Congress to helping hard-working families, fighting to fix our broken immigration system, and guaranteeing access to quality, affordable health care for all. As one of the most senior members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Ed also has served as a mentor and role model to young Latinos and Latinas throughout Arizona and our country, and his leadership will be missed. Michelle and I thank Congressman Pastor for his service, and we wish him, his wife Verma, and their children and grandchildren the very best in the future.

Remarks at the White House Student Film Festival
February 28, 2014

The President. Hello. My name is Shelly Ortiz and—oh, wrong page. [*Laughter*] All right, then, I was just teasing. I knew I wasn't Shelly Ortiz. [*Laughter*] Everybody, give Shelly a big round of applause for the great work. Thank you so much. Thanks for not only the introduction, but for the beautiful video that you made about your dad.

Shelly Ortiz. Thank you.

The President. Us dads, we get pretty touched by stuff like that. [*Laughter*]

And I am thrilled that all of you are with us for our first-ever White House Student Film Festival. And I know we're running a little bit late. It's not because the projector was not working. It was because of me. But I appreciate all of you guys being here and your patience.

The Academy Awards are not until Sunday, but as you can see, we've brought the Oscars to the White House a little bit early. And I want to thank our partners: Fox, National Geographic, and the American Film Institute. We've got the red carpet, we've got the big screens, the opening monologue. The only difference is nobody asks what you're wearing. [*Laughter*]

And we've got Bill Nye the Science Guy and Neil deGrasse Tyson from the Hayden Planetarium, who might even give you a sneak peak of his new show, "Cosmos," if everybody behaves themselves. And I saw the original version—I'm a little older than all of you—and it was spectacular and wonderful, and I know this is going to be not just as good, but even better. And so we're thrilled with that. And we're putting on a big show here because we're honoring some remarkable filmmakers.

I've said before, I believe, and I hope all of us believe, that every child in America deserves a world-class education, especially in science and technology and engineering and math, because it's skills like these that made us an economic superpower and built our middle class. We also need folks who are studying the arts because our film industry is a huge generator of jobs and economic power here in the United States, and it tells us our story and helps us to find what's—our common humanity.

And it's skills like these that allowed NASA to announce the other day that we've discovered more than 700 new planets. [*Applause*] That's cool. I mean, we didn't make the planets, but we—[*laughter*]—we found out that they were there. And one of the ways that we deliver the best education in the world is by empowering our students with the best technology in the world.

To help inspire us, we invited students from across the country to send their videos about how their schools use technology today, how they might use it in the future. So kids got to—got their cameras out and went to work. And

we received about 2,500 videos—2,500. And we watched them all. I did not personally watch them all, but the White House watched them all.

And today the Oscar goes to all of you. Because among all the incredible videos we received, yours stood out. And in my official capacity as President, let me just say, these movies are awesome. Like all great movies, yours do something special: They tell a story. They help us understand, in this case, the amazing things that are going on in classrooms and how technology is empowering our students and broadening their imaginations and challenging them to dream bigger and reach further.

Now, here is the spoiler alert: There is some wonderful stuff going on out there. So even before you have seen some of these films, you need to know that what these filmmakers have displayed is the incredible innovation and creativity of this generation coming up.

You've got Gabrielle Nafie and Miles Pilchik from Science Tech Kids in New York. [*Applause*] Hey! They showed us that their class isn't just dreaming about going into space, they're actually going into space. They designed density experiments and used a 3–D printer to build tiny satellites to hold them. And then they actually launched a giant balloon that carried their satellites up to the edge of space—very cool——

Gabrielle Nafie. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

The President. ——so they could collect the data. When I was in elementary school, I was not launching satellites into space.

You've got Alex Emerson, who showed how his sixth—his eighth-grade class at Brookwood School in Massachusetts changed the definition of pen pals by video chatting with students in Uganda. And one of the things they did was collaborate on cook stoves that help families in rural areas cook safer and with cleaner energy.

And it doesn't stop with what's possible today. These videos show how students are imagining the future: classrooms that are fully accessible to classmates with disabilities, individualized learning platforms that you can carry around in your pocket. And that's the kind of creativity and imagination we want all of our young people to embrace.

We cannot wait to see more of that innovative spirit later this year when we host our first-ever White House Maker Faire. We've already—we already have a White House Science Fair. This new event is going to highlight how Americans young and old—tinkerers and inventors—are imagining and designing and building tools and machines that will open our minds and power our economy.

We want to bring this spirit—including more technology—into the classroom. And that's why I launched something we're calling ConnectED, our initiative to close the technology gap in our schools and connect 99 percent of America's students to high-speed broadband Internet within 5 years. Because when the average American school has about the same Internet bandwidth as the average American home, but serves 200 times as many people, that means our students are at a disadvantage. And when less than 30 percent of our students have access to true high-speed Internet in their classroom, while in South Korea students have a hundred percent, that's like waving the white flag when it comes to our global competition. But here's what I think: In a country where we expect free Wi-Fi at our coffee shops, then we should demand it in our schools and in our libraries.

So this is not something we can do alone. And as a consequence, I picked up the phone and started asking business leaders to help bring our schools and libraries into the 21st century. They did not just answer the call, they came up huge. So earlier this month, some of our biggest technology companies committed to more than $750 million in computers and software and broadband access to put our kids and classrooms on the cutting edge of technology.

Today I'm proud to announce that more companies are getting on board. Prezi will provide over a hundred million dollars in presentation products to help students develop ready-to-work skills in slideshows and creative communication. So give them a big round of applause. We're very proud of them for that.

And Adobe will make available, for free, more than $300 million in creating—creative and teaching software so that kids can turn their ideas into films and graphics, and teachers can deliver lessons electronically. So give Adobe a big round of applause. [*Applause*] Proud of them. Thank you.

If you're quick at math, which I know you are, then you'll see that this means we've delivered over $1 billion in technology commitments to our schools, which isn't too shabby for 1 month. But there's still more to do, and we need even more companies to get on board. Because, thanks to innovative schools and teachers and students like all of you, we know what school might look like in the century ahead: classrooms wired to space, and students who are fluent in coding and web design, teachers collaborating on projects with peers around the world. We've always imagined giving every child the chance to learn like that. And with these private sector partners, we're helping to make it a reality.

So let me leave you with a wonderful example of the difference that technology can make. Kyle Weintraub is a seventh grader at David Posnak Jewish Day School in Florida. And last year, he was diagnosed with lymphoma, had to move to Pennsylvania for treatment. In the past, that meant Kyle would have had to leave his school and his friends behind. But every day, Kyle puts on his school uniform, and without even leaving his room in Pennsylvania, he goes to school in Florida because he has a special robot with a high-tech video feed that goes to class for him. And even as he's getting medical treatment and fights to get better, Kyle can keep up with his studies, controlling his robot from his computer at home. And through a video feed, Kyle can see his classmates; they can see him. So the robot doesn't just have a name, they just say, "Hey, Kyle."

And he can look around the classroom, move down the hallways, even sit with his friends at lunch. And I know the teachers think this is just extraordinary as well, because if there's one thing you don't want to do, is start a food fight with a robot. [*Laughter*] So everybody kind of seems to be better behaved when Kyle's robot is around. Kyle is here today. He did not bring his robot, but everybody give Kyle a big round of applause.

Kyle's story is just one example of what's possible when we put our extraordinary technologies to work for our students and our schools. And that's what this film festival is about. So to all the young filmmakers out there, remember, you are much better at this than all that adults. [*Laughter*] It's your imagination and your creativity and your innovation and your dreams that are going to help this country move forward.

Keep up the great work. We could not be prouder of you. Your parents are proud of you, I know that, but I am too. And America is counting on you.

So with that, let's start the show. All right? Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:11 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Shelly Ortiz, student, Metropolitan Arts Institute in Phoenix, AZ, and her father Epi Ortiz; Gabrielle Nafie and Miles Pilchik, student ambassadors, SciTech Kids learning center in New York City; William S. Nye, television personality and executive director of the Planetary Society; Neil deGrasse Tyson, director, Hayden Planetarium; and Alex Emerson, student, Brookwood School in Manchester, MA.

Remarks on the Situation in Ukraine
February 28, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody.

Over the last several days, the United States has been responding to events as they unfold in Ukraine. Now, throughout this crisis, we have been very clear about one fundamental principle: The Ukrainian people deserve the opportunity to determine their own future. Together with our European allies, we have urged an

end to the violence and encouraged Ukrainians to pursue a course in which they stabilize their country, forge a broad-based government, and move to elections this spring.

I also spoke several days ago with President Putin, and my administration has been in daily communication with Russian officials, and we've made clear that they can be part of an international community's effort to support the stability and success of a united Ukraine going forward, which is not only in the interest of the people of Ukraine and the international community, but also in Russia's interest.

However, we are now deeply concerned by reports of military movements taken by the Russian Federation inside of Ukraine. Russia has a historic relationship with Ukraine, including cultural and economic ties and a military facility in Crimea, but any violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity would be deeply destabilizing, which is not in the interest of Ukraine, Russia, or Europe.

It would represent a profound interference in matters that must be determined by the Ukrainian people. It would be a clear violation of Russia's commitment to respect the independence and sovereignty and borders of Ukraine and of international laws. And just days after the world came to Russia for the Olympic Games, it would invite the condemnation of nations around the world. And indeed, the United States will stand with the international community in affirming that there will be costs for any military intervention in Ukraine.

The events of the past several months remind us of how difficult democracy can be in a country with deep divisions. But the Ukrainian people have also reminded us that human beings have a universal right to determine their own future.

Right now the situation remains very fluid. Vice President Biden just spoke with Prime Minister—the Prime Minister of Ukraine to assure him that in this difficult moment, the United States supports his government's efforts and stands for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and democratic future of Ukraine. I also commend the Ukrainian Government's restraint and its commitment to uphold its international obligations.

We will continue to coordinate closely with our European allies, we will continue to communicate directly with the Russian Government, and we will continue to keep all of you in the press corps and the American people informed as events develop.

Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk of Ukraine.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Meeting
February 28, 2014

The President. Hello, Democrats! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. You'd better be ready to go. All right, everybody have a seat. Have a seat. Take a load off. [*Laughter*] Oh, I've got to—I see a lot of friends here. It is good to see all of you.

Let me begin by thanking Debbie Wasserman Schultz for being the outstanding leader that she is, not just for the people of Florida, but being an outstanding leader for this party. We're very proud of her. Our CEO, Amy Dacey, is here doing a terrific job already. Hit the ground running. I want to thank all the Governors and mayors and legislators and State party leaders and DNC members in the house and to all the DNC officers who are up here with me today. And all of them are just great friends and such incredible leaders who are moving the needle on behalf of justice, equity, and economic growth every single day. So we're really proud of them. And thank you to the millions of Americans in all 50 States who help our party thrive at the grassroots——

Audience member. Puerto Rico!

The President. ——and Puerto Rico—[*laughter*]—every single day. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

Well, it's Friday. It's after 5 o'clock. So this is now officially happy hour with the Democratic Party. I can do that. It is an executive action. I have the authority. [*Laughter*] Henry is picking up the tab. [*Laughter*]

Democrats, for more than 200 years, our country, our success, our progress, our people—all of it has been grounded, it's been based, rooted in a basic promise: the promise of opportunity for all. It means that here in America, what matters isn't what we look like, what our last name is, who we love, how we started out. What matters is the strength of our work ethic, the scope of our dreams, our willingness to take responsibility not only for ourselves and our families and our immediate community, but for all people; that we take responsibility for each other. That's what makes America the place that it is, a place where you can make it if you try. That's what makes it a beacon for people from all around the world.

It's what this country was built on. And it is the idea that this party is built on. And that's why, with your help, I ran for President, so we could keep that promise alive for this generation and for generations to come. And together, we have made progress.

Today, after the worst crisis of our lifetimes, our businesses have created half—8½ million new jobs over the past 4 years. A housing market that was reeling is now rebounding. An auto industry that was flatlining is now booming. A manufacturing sector that lost one-third of its jobs in the previous decade is now adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. Troops that were fighting two wars are coming home. Rather than create jobs in other countries, more companies are choosing to create jobs and invest right here in the United States of America. We're producing more energy than ever before, and we are reducing the climate pollution that threatens the future of our children and our grandchildren.

So we've made progress, and that's why I believe this can be a breakthrough year for America. After 5 years of grit and determined effort, no other country is better positioned for the 21st century. And that's not just my opinion. If you talk to big investors, you talk to CEOs, you talk to the leaders of other countries, and they look at us, and they say, you have so much going for you.

But we all know we've still got more to do. We've got work to do. Because the trends that have battered the middle class for decades have not been reversed; in some cases, they've grown starker. After 4½ years of economic growth, corporate profits and stock prices have rarely been higher. Those at the top have never done better. But average wages have barely budged. Too many middle class families are working harder than ever, but they're treading water. And too many families can't seem to work their way into the middle class at all. The ladders of opportunity are now eroding.

And our job is to reverse those trends. Our job is to rebuild an economy that grows for the many, not just the few: an economy where working Americans feel secure in their jobs and their homes and their finances. Our job, not just as Democrats, but as Americans, is to restore opportunity for all. That's why we're in this. Those are our values.

And obviously, this is an election year. But an election that's 8 months away shouldn't stop us from making progress right now. There are things we can be doing right now to help the American people, and we shouldn't be doing nothing because there's an election coming up.

I've said I want to work with Congress wherever I can, and there are places where the parties can work together to get things done. But I've also said and shown that in this year of action, wherever I can act on my own to expand opportunity for more Americans, I will. That's what I owe the American people. That's what we all owe the American people.

Now, me saying that, that I'm going to go ahead and do things to help middle class families, has gotten Republicans in Congress all stirred up, as if they'd prefer to do nothing. But we're going to keep moving forward on the agenda the American people elected us to move forward on.

And the fact is, we've got a fundamental disagreement with the other side. And that's okay; this is a democracy, that's how it works. But we have a fundamental disagreement about what we need to do now to secure our future. And don't get me wrong, I consider——

Audience member. Mr. Obama!

The President. ——I consider Republicans patriots who love this country just as much as we do.

Audience member. Tell us about your plans for nuclear war with Russia!

The President. I'm sorry, who's that back there? [*Laughter*] What the heck are you talking about? [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. No, no, don't worry about it. [*Laughter*] We're okay. We're—have a seat. I don't know anything about that plan. [*Laughter*] I don't know what you've been reading. [*Laughter*] Let me return to what I was talking about. See, he thought happy hour started earlier. [*Laughter*]

Now, don't get me wrong, I think the Republicans are patriots; they love this country just like we do. They love their kids, they love their communities, but they just keep on offering a theory of the economy that, time and again, has failed America. They think we should give more tax breaks to those at the top and invest less in things like education and research. I'm not making that up. Go on their website. That's what they think. They think we should let big banks and credit card companies and insurers do only what's best for their bottom line without responsibility to their customers or their communities.

Despite what we saw in 2007, 2008, and the consequences of that crisis, they think we should drastically reduce or eliminate the safety net for more people. We're seeing that right now played out in the debate about unemployment insurance. They'll even shut down the Government or threaten the full faith and credit of our country when they don't get their way. And if we do all these things, they are convinced that the economy will thrive and jobs and prosperity will trickle down to everybody. That's what they believe. And they have a right to hold those beliefs.

But the American people know better, because what they're offering is not a new theory. It's a theory they presented in the runup to the Great Depression. It's a theory they expounded in the runup to the crisis in 2008. It's a theory they just repeated in the election in 2012. And the American people said, no thanks, we don't have confidence in that theory. And just because this theory has a history doesn't mean it should have a future. It's time to retire this theory. It doesn't work. [*Applause*] Doesn't work.

And that's why the outcome of this election is so important. It won't just set the direction of this country for the next 2 years, it will set the direction for this country for years to come. And the choice could not be clearer: opportunity for a few or opportunity for all. That's what this election is about.

As Democrats, we have a different idea of what the future looks like, an idea rooted in our conviction that our economy grows best not from the top down, but from the middle out. That's what an opportunity agenda offers. Opportunity for all begins with access to a good job. Next week, I will send Congress a budget that will create new jobs in manufacturing and energy and innovation and infrastructure. And we'll pay for every dime of it by cutting unnecessary spending, closing wasteful tax loopholes.

Now, Republicans have a different view. Just last month, R.T., their party actually made it a part of their platform to let folks at the very top play by a different set of rules and avoid paying their fair share by stashing their money in overseas tax havens, a practice that also adds billions of dollars to our deficits every year.

As Democrats, we believe that instead of more tax breaks for the few, we should make investments that grow the economy for everyone. That's what we believe.

Opportunity for all means guaranteeing every young person access to a world-class education. Four years ago—I'll just give you an example—4 years ago, we took on a student loan system that gave billions of taxpayer dollars to

big banks as part of the student loan system, even as there were young people out there who weren't getting the help they needed to go to school. So we used the savings to help more students afford college. Today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before.

You would think Republicans would say, you know what, that's a good idea. Good for you, Mr. President. [*Laughter*] But no: The Republicans still want to return that money to the banks.

As Democrats, we're fighting to make sure that more Americans can afford higher education, whether it's technical training, community colleges, a 4-year university. That's what we believe. That's what we're fighting for.

Opportunity for all means building an economy that rewards hard work for every American, not only with a paycheck that supports a family, but with equal pay for equal work and health care when we get sick and secure retirements even if we're not rich and the chance to hand down some hope and optimism to our kids.

At a time when women make up half of our workforce, it's an outrage that women can still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. This isn't 1954, it's 2014. A woman deserves equal pay for equal work. She deserves to have a baby without sacrificing her job. A mother deserves to take a day off to care for a sick kid or a sick parent without running into hardship, and a father does too. And every woman deserves to control her own health care choices—not her boss, not her insurer, not anybody in Congress.

I don't know why we're still arguing about this. [*Laughter*] I saw that some Republicans in Congress brought in outside aides to teach them how to talk to women. [*Laughter*] It is unclear how they've gotten this far without that particular skill. [*Laughter*] But talking the talk ain't walking the walk. The problem isn't how they talk about their policies, the problem is their policies. They have to decide which side they're on, what they believe in. Because we know what side we're on. As Democrats, we believe that when women succeed, America succeeds. That's what we think.

As Americans, we believe that no one should work full time and have to raise their family in poverty. In the year since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, six States have passed laws to raise theirs, and more are working to join them. And more businesses are choosing to do it too. Last week, the Gap made a smart business decision to raise wages that will benefit about 65,000 workers in the United States. They think it's a good business practice.

I took action to lift more workers' wages by requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. Because if you're cooking our troops' meals or washing their dishes, this country should pay you a wage you can live on.

So it's time to raise a minimum wage that is worth less than it was when Ronald Reagan was in office. And the American people are way ahead of Congress on this. A majority of Americans support raising the minimum wage. But Republicans in Congress, surprisingly enough, oppose raising the minimum wage. Some of them want to scrap it entirely. A House Republican said the other day: "I think it has outlived its usefulness. I would vote to repeal the minimum wage." [*Laughter*] You had a Senate Republican said it has never worked. And when the Republican leader in the Senate was asked if they should hold a vote at all, he said, "I would hope not." Think about that.

Tell that to the millions of folks out there who are working so hard every day, and at the end of the month, they just can't stretch that paycheck to pay all their bills. Tell that to the women who are most likely to hold lower wage jobs. Tell that to the average minimum wage worker who's 35 years old. When I signed that Executive order to make sure that Federal contractors paid a minimum wage, we had a group of those workers who were going to be impacted. And these weren't teenagers, these were folks with families doing hard work, hard jobs that are necessary and that we benefit from. And higher wages are good for them, and

they're good for their families, and they're good for our economy.

And it gives businesses more customers with more money to spend, and the economy grows for everybody. And those employers, because they've got more customers and are making more profits, now decide to hire more workers. It is a virtuous cycle that we can create. It is time to give America a raise or elect more Democrats who will do it.

Of course, for years now, rather than focusing on creating jobs or raising wages or helping more young people afford college, Republicans in Congress have been obsessed with one thing above all else. No, not Ted Nugent. [*Laughter*] They have been obsessed with repealing the Affordable Care Act. You know what they say: "Fiftieth time is the charm. [*Laughter*] Maybe when you hit your 50th repeal vote, you will win a prize. Maybe if you buy 50 repeal votes, you get 1 free. [*Laughter*] We get it. We understand. We get you don't like it. I got it. [*Laughter*]

For 5 years, Republicans in Congress have been talking about offering a serious plan of their own, their alternative. You can go back and look at every year—2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013—every year: "Our alternative plan is right around the corner." [*Laughter*] "We're just about to put it on the floor." "We're going to have a vote." "We're still in the drafting process." Every year. I'm sure it's coming any day now. [*Laughter*]

The reason they don't do it, of course, is that we already took the best ideas that are out there about bringing down costs and covering more people. Yes, there have been some disruptions. Yes, we lost that first month out of the gate. And we've worked hard to fix problems that have come up without any cooperation from them; in fact, they've complained when we fix them. They say, how dare you fix the things we were complaining about? [*Laughter*] Have you noticed that? They'll complain about something, and then we take steps to fix it: "You're a tyrant." "You're overreaching." [*Laughter*] You're laughing, but it's true. I'm not making this stuff up.

But millions of Americans are more secure and will be more secure because of what we did. Millions of Americans. Because as Democrats, we believe that no hard-working American should ever go broke just because they get sick. And this week, we topped 4 million Americans who have signed up for new private insurance plans, which is on top of the 3 million young people who have gotten coverage by staying on their parent's plan and the millions of Americans who have gotten coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Plan and the millions of seniors who have gotten discounts on their prescription drugs.

And thanks to the Affordable Care Act, no American—not one, zero—can ever again be dropped or denied coverage just because of a preexisting condition like asthma or cancer. And no woman can ever again be charged more for just being a woman.

I wish sometimes you could see the letters that we get from folks who write to me. Smallbusinesspeople who say, I didn't vote for you, I don't really like you, but I'm saving money. Folks who say, I did not have insurance and found out I had a potentially fatal disease, and because of the Affordable Care Act, I can write you here today. That's not something to repeal. That's something to celebrate. That's something to build on.

I've said before, you want to work on us—on ways that we can make this better, I'm happy to listen. But Republicans can flirt with taking away these protections and the peace of mind that millions of Americans are now getting. If they want, they can vote to have seniors pay more for their medicine again. If they want to stand up and assert that they're going to let women get charged more again and tell more parents that you're on your own again, that's their prerogative.

But as Democrats, we're going to keep working to make this law work even better, and we're going to keep working, family by family and block by block and neighborhood by neighborhood, on campuses and in churches, to get more Americans covered with the economic security and peace of mind that quality, affordable health insurance provides. We will not apologize for it. It's the right thing to do.

So the bottom line is, the Republican Party can keep telling the country what they're against: They're against the Affordable Care Act. They're against the minimum wage. They're against equal pay laws. They're against commonsense immigration reform. They're against the very existence of climate change. [*Laughter*] But, Democrats, we're going to keep telling America what we're for, from giving America a raise to getting America covered. Because the people we serve are not interested in leaders who are rooting for failure, and they're not interested in leaders who are only interested in refighting the old ideological battles. They want us focused on their lives and their hopes and their aspirations and their kids.

And the last thing they can afford is a Congress that gives free rein back to mortgage companies and credit card companies and insurers and big banks that we're finally holding accountable. The ability to make your own choices rather than have powerful interests make them for you is too important to our future to be undone by politicians who are stuck in the past. In some States, they're so far in the past they're even pushing laws to legalize segregation based on sexual orientation.

As Democrats, we've let the other side define the word "freedom" for too long. Let me tell you something. Freedom doesn't mean the ability to ask, "What's in it for me?" Freedom is not: "I've got no obligations to anybody. I've got no responsibility for anybody." It's not freedom when powerful interests can use the fine print to trick you into buying a home you can't afford or hit you with hidden fees or rate hikes or drop your health insurance without warning. That's not freedom.

Freedom is the peace of mind of knowing that if you got sick, you won't lose everything. Freedom is the ability to change jobs and start a new business, chase a new idea without fear of losing your health insurance. Freedom is signing for that new home and knowing it can't be taken from you because you actually understand what you're signing. Freedom is getting that new credit card and knowing the stakes and understanding how you're going to manage it; enrolling in college and knowing what you'll owe once you graduate.

Freedom is the knowledge that your future in this country is secure: You're not going to be treated like a second-class person once we fix our broken immigration system. That's freedom. Freedom is the ability to go into a store or a restaurant without the fear that you'd be refused service because of who you are or who you love.

So we're not ceding that word. Freedom for the most powerful interests to do whatever they want—that's, I suppose, one form of freedom. But freedom for ordinary Americans to honestly pursue their dreams, that's what we believe. That's the choice we face right now: opportunity for a few or opportunity for all.

And Republicans in Congress have already given America a measuring stick. The top Republican in the House said America should judge them not on how many laws they pass—which isn't a lot—[*laughter*]—but on how many they repeal. That's what they said. And the top Republican in the Senate said his top priority wasn't to create jobs or expand opportunity, but to beat me.

So let's look at the scorecard. They're 0 for 2. [*Applause*] They're 0 for 2. This November, let's make them 0 for 3. What do you think, Donna? Let's make them 0 for 3.

That's where all of you come in. That's where the DNC can make a difference. Because when Democrats have everybody on the field, we cannot lose. That's just a fact. That's just the raw numbers. When Democrats vote, we win. There are more folks who believe in what we stand for than believe in what they stand for.

And the other side knows that. And their models are constructed based on the idea that Americans will sit out this election. Because they look at the past, and in the past, it's true. A lot of Democrats don't vote during midterms. We just don't. Young people, African Americans, Latinos—we just, oftentimes, don't vote during midterms. And the Republicans say this. One top Republican—one Republican in one State assembly said: "A lot of minorities and a lot of younger people will not turn out in

a non-Presidential year. It's a great year for Republicans!" That's a quote. It's a great year for Republicans: A whole bunch of people aren't voting. [*Laughter*]

Everybody laughs when I say these things. This is what they say. Look it up. Which explains why some in their party are always trying to make it harder for people to vote. And that's a big difference between our parties. We believe that more voices don't make America weaker; more voices make us stronger, it makes us better. We're greater together.

And that's why the DNC isn't just protecting the right to vote, you're registering more people to vote. You're expanding the electorate, not constricting it. You're building on the data and technology infrastructure we've built over a decade. You're pushing back on the lies and misinformation from those who can't win on the truth. And you're supporting our State parties and building our grassroots, because we are Democrats, and we believe that change comes not from the top down, but from the bottom up.

We're the party of Tom Jefferson, who declared that all men are created equal. We're the party of Franklin Roosevelt, who believed in basic measures of security and dignity for every American and who saved freedom and democracy from being extinguished here on Earth.

We're the party of John F. Kennedy, who summoned us to serve and who believed that a rising tide should lift all boats and who proved that we lead the world not only through the force of our arms, but the enduring strength of our values.

And we're the party of Bill Clinton, a party that has proved that with smart choices we can grow our economy and shrink our deficits and invest in our people, a party that believes in opportunity for all and responsibility from all. That's who we are as Democrats.

And if we stay focused on what we believe, and if we speak to America's hopes over their fears, if we inspire them rather than divide them and respond to their challenges with the same urgency they feel in their own lives, we won't just win in November, we'll win for America and for our future.

Thank you very much, DNC. I love you. God bless. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:36 p.m. at the Capital Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Deborah Wasserman Schultz, in her capacity as chair, Henry R. Muñoz III, national finance committee chair, former Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis, MN, in his capacity as vice chair, and Donna Brazile, vice chair of voter registration and participation, Democratic National Committee; Rep. Joseph L. Barton; Sen. Marco A. Rubio; Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell; musician Ted Nugent; Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner; and Rep. Pat Hickey, minority leader, Nevada State Assembly. He also referred to Executive Order 13658, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Zimbabwe
February 28, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13288 of March 6, 2003, with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Govern-

ment of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2014.

The threat constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions has not been resolved. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
February 28, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
March 1, 2014

Hi, everybody. In my State of the Union Address, I said that the best measure of opportunity is access to a good job. And after the worst recession of our lifetimes, our businesses have created 8½ million new jobs in the last 4 years.

But we need to do more to make America a magnet for good jobs for the future. And in this year of action, where Congress won't do that, I will do whatever I can to expand opportunity for more Americans. This week, I took two actions to attract new jobs to America: jobs in American manufacturing and jobs rebuilding America's infrastructure.

Here's why this is important. In the 2000s alone, we lost more than one-third of all American manufacturing jobs. One in three. And when the housing bubble burst, workers in the construction industry were hit harder than just about anybody. The good news is, today, our manufacturers have added more than 620,000 jobs over the last 4 years; that's the first sustained growth in manufacturing jobs since the 1990s.

Still, the economy has changed. And if we want to attract more good manufacturing jobs to America, we've got to make sure we're on the cutting edge of new manufacturing technologies and techniques. And in today's global economy, first-class jobs gravitate to first-class infrastructure.

That's why, on Tuesday, I launched two new high-tech manufacturing hubs, places where businesses and universities will partner to turn groundbreaking research into real-world goods made in America. So far, we've launched four of these hubs, where our workers can master 3–D printing, energy-efficient electronics, lightweight metals, and digital manufacturing, all technologies that can help ensure a steady stream of good jobs well into the 21st century.

Then, on Wednesday I launched a new competition to build 21st-century infrastructure: roads and bridges, mass transit, more efficient ports, and faster passenger rail. Rebuilding America won't just attract new businesses, it will create good construction jobs that can't be shipped overseas.

Of course, Congress could make an even bigger difference in both areas. Thanks to the leadership of a bipartisan group of lawmakers, there's a bill in Congress right now that would create an entire network of high-tech manufacturing hubs all across the country. And next week, I'll send Congress a budget that will rebuild our transportation systems and support millions of jobs nationwide.

There's a lot we can do if we work together. And while Congress decides what it's going to do, I'm going to keep doing everything in my power to rebuild an economy where everyone who works hard has the chance to get ahead and where we're restoring our founding vision of opportunity for all.

Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:15 a.m. on February 28 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on March 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 28, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on March 1.

Joint Statement by Group of Seven Leaders on the Situation in Ukraine
March 2, 2014

We, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States and the President of the European Council and President of the European Commission, join together today to condemn the Russian Federation's clear violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in contravention of Russia's obligations under the UN Charter and its 1997 basing agreement with Ukraine. We call on Russia to address any ongoing security or human rights concerns that it has with Ukraine through direct negotiations, and/or via international observation or mediation under the auspices of the UN or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We stand ready to assist with these efforts.

We also call on all parties concerned to behave with the greatest extent of self-restraint and responsibility, and to decrease the tensions.

We note that Russia's actions in Ukraine also contravene the principles and values on which the G–7 and the G–8 operate. As such, we have decided for the time being to suspend our participation in activities associated with the preparation of the scheduled G–8 Summit in Sochi in June, until the environment comes back where the G–8 is able to have meaningful discussion.

We are united in supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and its right to choose its own future. We commit ourselves to support Ukraine in its efforts to restore unity, stability, and political and economic health to the country. To that end, we will support Ukraine's work with the International Monetary Fund to negotiate a new program and to implement needed reforms. IMF support will be critical in unlocking additional assistance from the World Bank, other international financial institutions, the EU, and bilateral sources.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and an Exchange With Reporters
March 3, 2014

President Obama. Well, it's a pleasure to welcome once again Prime Minister Netanyahu to the Oval Office. There's nobody I've met with more or consulted with more than Bibi. And it's a testimony to the incredible bond between our two nations. I've said before, and I will repeat: We do not have a closer friend or ally than Israel, and the bond between our two countries and our two peoples in unbreakable.

And that's the reason why on a whole spectrum of issues, we consult closely; we have the kind of military and intelligence and security cooperation that is unprecedented. And there is a strong bipartisan commitment in this country to make sure that Israel's security is preserved in any contingency.

We're going to have a wide range of issues obviously to discuss given what's happening on the world stage and in the Middle East, in particular. So we'll spend some time discussing the situation in Syria and the need for us to not only find a political solution to the tragic situation there, but also to address growing extremism inside of Syria, the spillover effects on Lebanon and Jordan, in particular.

We'll have an opportunity to discuss the work that we do in counterterrorism and the work that we are going to be continuing to do to try to stabilize an environment that has become very dangerous in many respects.

We'll also have a chance to talk about Egypt, a country that obviously is of critical importance and where we have the opportunity, I think, to move beyond recent events over the last several years to a point in which once again there is a legitimate path towards political transition inside of Egypt. And that's important to Israel's security as well as to U.S. security.

We're going to be talking about Iran and my absolute commitment to make sure that Iran does not have a nuclear weapon, something that I know the Prime Minister feels very deeply about. And we will discuss how the Joint Plan of Action that is currently in place can potentially, at least, lead to a solution that ensures that Iran is not developing a nuclear weapon.

And we'll spend time talking about the prospects of peace between Israelis and Palestinians. I want to commend publicly the efforts that Prime Minister Netanyahu have made in very lengthy and painstaking negotiations with my Secretary of State, John Kerry, Abu Mazen. They are tough negotiations. The issues are profound. Obviously, if they were easy, they would have been resolved many years ago. But I think that Prime Minister Netanyahu has approached these negotiations with a level of seriousness and commitment that reflects his leadership and the desire for the Israeli people for peace.

It's my belief that ultimately, it is still possible to create two states—a Jewish State of Israel and a state of Palestine—in which people are living side by side in peace and security. But it's difficult, and it requires compromise on all sides. And I just want to publicly again commend the Prime Minister for the seriousness with which he's taken these discussions.

The frame—timeframe that we have set up for completing these negotiations is coming near, and some tough decisions are going to have to be made. But I know that, regardless of the outcome, that the Prime Minister will make those decisions based on his absolute commitment to Israel's security and his recognition that ultimately, Israel's security will be enhanced by peace with its neighbors.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, I want to welcome you again, and thank you again for your leadership and your friendship with the American people.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Obama. Thank you.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you today, especially since I know you've got a few other pressing matters on your plate. During the 5 years of your Presidency, you and I—and Israel and the United States—have worked very closely on critically important issues—security, intelligence sharing, missile defense—and we're deeply grateful for that.

I look forward to working closely with you in the years ahead to address the main challenges that confront both our countries, and of these, the greatest challenge, undoubtedly, is to prevent Iran from acquiring the capacity to make nuclear weapons. I think that goal can be achieved if Iran is prevented from enriching uranium and dismantles fully its military-nuclear installations.

Now, Mr. President, if that goal can be achieved peacefully and through diplomacy, I can tell you that no country has a greater stake in this than Israel. Because, as you know and I'm sure you'll appreciate, Iran calls openly for Israel's destruction, so I'm sure you'll appreciate that Israel cannot permit such a state to have the ability to make atomic bombs to achieve that goal. We just cannot be brought back again to the brink of destruction. And I, as the Prime Minister of Israel, will do whatever I must do to defend the Jewish state.

We're also going to discuss the peace process, as you said. I want to thank you and Secretary Kerry for, when I say tireless efforts, I mean tireless efforts that he is putting into this quest, as you are. It's an opportunity to congratulate Secretary Kerry on the birth of his new granddaughter. Mr. Secretary, you may not be aware of this, but the news of the new

granddaughter came to Secretary Kerry while we were discussing the peace process. So we've had many productive meetings, but this is truly a productive meeting. [*Laughter*] And so I thank you both for you efforts and your team's.

The 20 years that have passed since Israel entered the peace process have been marked by unprecedented steps that Israel has taken to advance peace. I mean, we vacated cities in Judea and Samaria. We left entirely Gaza. We've not only frozen settlements, we've uprooted entire settlements. We've released hundreds of terrorist prisoners, including dozens in recent months.

And when you see—look at what we got in return, it's been scores of suicide bombers, thousands of rockets on our cities fired from the areas we vacated, and just incessant Palestinian incitement against Israel. So Israel has been doing its part, and I regret to say that the Palestinians haven't.

Now, I know this flies in the face of conventional wisdom, but it's the truth. And the people of Israel know that it's the truth because they've been living it. What they want is peace. What we all want fervently is peace: not a piece a paper—although that too—but a real peace, a peace that is anchored in mutual recognition of two nation-states that recognize and respect one another and solid security arrangements on the ground.

Mr. President, you rightly said that Israel, the Jewish state, is the realization of the Jewish people's self-determination in our ancestral homeland. So the Palestinians expect us to recognize a Palestinian state for the Palestinian people, a nation-state for the Palestinian people. I think it's about time they recognize a nation-state for the Jewish people. We've only been there for 4,000 years.

And I hope President Abbas does this, as I hope that he'll take seriously Israel's genuine security needs. Because, as you know and I think everybody does, in the Middle East, which is definitely the most turbulent and violent part of the Earth, the only peace that will endure is a peace that we can defend. And we've learned from our history—Jewish history, but I think from general history—that the best way to guarantee peace is to be strong. And that's what the people of Israel expect me to do, to stand strong against criticism, against pressure, stand strong to secure the future of the one and only Jewish state.

And I think there is a partnership there, a partnership between Israel and America, that I think is important for this end. I want to thank you again for your friendship and your hospitality and the warmth you've shown me on this snowy Washington day. I thank you. It's good to see you again.

President Obama. Appreciate it. Thank you.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you.

[*At this point, several reporters began speaking at once*.]

President Obama. Julie Pace [Associated Press].

Ukraine/Russia's Role in Ukraine

Q. The initial punishments that the U.S. is threatening against Russia for their advances into Ukraine don't seem to be having much of an effect. What leverage do you believe you have over President Putin at this point? And is the U.S. concerned primarily about getting Russian forces out of Crimea, or are you also concerned about Russian forces moving into parts of eastern Ukraine?

President Obama. All of the above. I spent the weekend talking to leaders across Europe, and I think the world is largely united in recognizing that the steps Russia has taken are a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, Ukraine's territorial integrity; that they're a violation of international law; they're a violation of previous agreements that Russia has made with respect to how it treats and respects its neighbors. And as a consequence, we got strong statements from NATO, from the G–7, condemning the actions that Russia has taken. And we are going to continue these diplomatic efforts during the course of this week.

My interest is seeing the Ukrainian people be able to determine their own destiny. Russia has strong historic ties to the Ukraine. There are a lot of Russian nationals inside of Ukraine

as well as native Russians, as there are a lot of Ukrainians inside of Russia. There are strong commercial ties between those two countries. And so all of those interests, I think, can be recognized. But what cannot be done is for Russia, with impunity, to put its soldiers on the ground and violate basic principles that are recognized around the world.

And I think the strong condemnation that it's received from countries around the world indicates the degree to which Russia is on the wrong side of history on this.

We are strongly supportive of the interim Ukrainian Government. John Kerry is going to be traveling to Kiev to indicate our support for the Ukrainian people, to offer very specific and concrete packages of economic aid. Because one of the things we're concerned about is stabilizing the economy even in the midst of this crisis. And what we are also indicating to the Russians is that if, in fact, they continue on the current trajectory that they're on, that we are examining a whole series of steps—economic, diplomatic—that will isolate Russia and will have a negative impact on Russia's economy and its status in the world.

We've already suspended preparations for the G–8 summit. I think you can expect that there would be further follow-up on that. I think we are taking a look at a whole range of issues that John Kerry mentioned yesterday.

And the question for Mr. Putin, who I spoke to directly, and the question for the Russian Government generally, is if in fact their concern is that the rights of all Ukrainians are respected, if in fact their primary concern, as they've stated, is that Russian speakers and Russian nationals are not in any way harmed or abused or discriminated against, then we should be able to set up international monitors and an international effort that mediates between various parties, that is able to broker a deal that is satisfactory to the Ukrainian people—not to the United States, not to Russia, but to the Ukrainian people—and we should be able to deescalate the situation.

And so we've been very specific with the Russians about how that might be done under the auspices of either the United Nations or the OSCE or some other international organization. And John Kerry will pursue that further when he arrives.

And so there are really two paths that Russia can take at this point. Obviously, the facts on the ground in Crimea are deeply troubling, and Russia has a large army that borders Ukraine. But what is also true is that over time, this will be a costly proposition for Russia. And now is the time for them to consider whether they can serve their interests in a way that resorts to diplomacy as opposed to force.

One last point I would make on this: I've heard a lot of talk from Congress about what should be done, what they want to do. One thing they can do right away is to work with the administration to help provide a package of assistance to the Ukrainians, to the people and that Government. And when they get back in, assuming the weather clears, I would hope that that would be the first order of business. Because at this stage there should be unanimity among Democrats and Republicans that when it comes to preserving the principle that no country has the right to send in troops to another country unprovoked, we should be able to come up with a unified position that stands outside of partisan politics. And my expectation is, is that I'll be able to get Congress to work with us in order to achieve that goal.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. He also referred to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Remarks on the Federal Budget and an Exchange With Reporters
March 4, 2014

The President. Good morning, everybody. I am here at Powell Elementary School and just had a chance to see some of the outstanding students here. And I thought it was an appropriate for me to say a few words about the budget that I sent to Congress this morning. Because obviously, the budget is not just about numbers, it's about our values, and it's about our future and how well we are laying the groundwork for those young children that I was with just a few moments ago to be able to succeed here in America. These kids may not be the most excited people in town on budget day, but my budget is designed with their generation and future generations in mind.

In my State of the Union Address, I laid out an agenda to restore opportunity for all people, to uphold the principle that no matter who you are, no matter where you started, you can make it if you try here in America.

This opportunity agenda is built on four parts: more good jobs at good wages, making sure that we're training workers with the skills they need to get those good jobs, guaranteeing every child access to a world-class education, and making sure that our economy is one in which hard work is rewarded.

The budget I sent Congress this morning lays out how we'll implement this agenda in a balanced and responsible way. It's a roadmap for creating jobs with good wages and expanding opportunity for all Americans. And at a time when our deficits have been cut in half, it allows us to meet our obligations to future generations without leaving them a mountain of debt. This budget adheres to the spending levels that both parties in both Houses of Congress already agreed to. But it also builds on that progress with what we're calling an Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative that invests in our economic priorities in a smart way that is fully paid for by making smart spending cuts and closing tax loopholes that right now only benefit the well off and the well connected.

I'll give you an example. Right now our tax system provides benefits to wealthy individuals who save, even after they've amassed multimillion-dollar retirement accounts. By closing that loophole, we can help create jobs and grow the economy and expand opportunity without adding a dime to the deficit.

We know that the country that wins the race for new technologies will win the race for new jobs, so this budget creates 45 high-tech manufacturing hubs where businesses and universities will partner to turn groundbreaking research into new industries and new jobs made in America.

We know—and this is part of the reason why we're here today—that education has to start at the earliest possible ages. So this budget expands access to the kind of high-quality preschool and other early learning programs to give all of our childrens the same kinds of opportunities that those wonderful children that we just saw are getting right here at Powell.

We know that while not all of today's good jobs are going to require a 4-year college degree, more and more of them are going to require some form of higher education or specialized training. So this budget expands apprenticeships to connect more ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs.

And we know that future generations will continue to deal with the effects of a warming planet, so this budget proposes a smarter way to address the costs of wildfires. And it includes over $1 billion in new funding for new technologies to help communities prepare for a changing climate today and set up incentives to build smarter and more resilient infrastructure.

We also know that the most effective and historically bipartisan ways to reduce poverty and help hard-working families pull themselves up is the earned-income tax credit. Right now it helps about half of all parents in America at some point in their lives. This budget gives millions more workers the opportunity to take advantage of the tax credit. And it

pays for it by closing loopholes like the ones that let wealthy individuals classify themselves as a small business to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

This budget will also continue to put our fiscal house in order over the long term, not by putting the burden on folks who can least afford it, but by reforming our Tax Code and our immigration system and building on the progress that we've made to reduce health care costs under the Affordable Care Act. And it puts our debt on a downward path as a share of our total economy, which independent experts have set as a critical target for fiscal responsibility.

As I said at the outset, our budget is about choices. It's about our values. As a country, we've got to make a decision if we're going to protect tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans, or if we're going to make smart investments necessary to create jobs and grow our economy and expand opportunity for every American. At a time when our deficits are falling at the fastest rate in 60 years, we've got to decide if we're going to keep squeezing the middle class or if we're going to continue to reduce the deficits responsibly, while taking steps to grow and strengthen the middle class.

The American people have made clear time and again which approach they prefer. That's the approach that my budget offers. That's why I'm going to fight for it this year and in the years to come as President. Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. Mr. President?

The President. Yes, Mike [Mike Dorning, Bloomberg News].

Ukraine/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. Do you have any response to President Putin's press conference this morning? Is Chancellor Merkel right that he's lost touch with reality? And have you spoken with him again personally?

The President. I haven't spoken to him since I spoke to him this past weekend. But obviously, me and my national security team have been watching events unfolding in Ukraine very closely. I met with them again today. As many of you know, John Kerry is in Kiev as we speak, at my direction. He's expressing our full support for the Ukrainian people.

Over the past several weeks, we are—we've been working with our partners and with the IMF to build international support for a package that helps to stabilize Ukraine's economy. And today we announced a significant package of our own to support the Ukraine's economy and also to provide them with the technical assistance that they need. So it includes a planned loan guarantee package of $1 billion. It provides immediate technical expertise to Ukraine to repair its economy. And importantly, it provides for assistance to help Ukraine plan for elections that are going to be coming up very soon.

As I said yesterday, it is important that Congress stand with us. I don't doubt the bipartisan concern that's been expressed by the situation in the Ukraine. There is something immediately Congress can do to help us, and that is to help finance the economic package that can stabilize the economy in Ukraine, help to make sure that fair and free elections take place very soon, and as a consequence, helps to deescalate the crisis.

In the meantime, we're consulting with our international allies across the board. Together, the international community has condemned Russia's violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. We've condemned their intervention in Crimea. And we are calling for a deescalation of the situation and international monitors that can go into the country right away.

And above all, we believe that the Ukrainian people should be able to decide their own future, which is why the world should be focused on helping them stabilize the situation economically and move towards the fair and free elections that are currently scheduled to take place in May.

There have been some reports that President Putin is pausing for a moment and reflecting on what's happened. I think that we've all seen that—from the perspective of the European Union, the United States, allies like

Canada and Japan, and allies and friends and partners around the world—there is a strong belief that Russia's action is violating international law. I know of—President Putin seems to have a different set of lawyers making a different set of interpretations, but I don't think that's fooling anybody.

I think everybody recognizes that although Russia has legitimate interests in what happens in a neighboring state, that does not give it the right to use force as a means of exerting influence inside of that state. We have said that if, in fact, there is any evidence out there that Russian speakers or Russian natives or Russian nationals are in any way being threatened, there are ways of dealing with that through international mechanisms. And we're prepared to make sure that the rights of all Ukrainians are upheld. And in fact, in conversations that we've had with the Government in Kiev, they have been more than willing to work with the international community and with Russia to provide such assurances.

So the fact that we are still seeing soldiers out of their barracks in Crimea is an indication to which what's happening there is not based on actual concern for Russian nationals or Russian speakers inside of Ukraine, but is based on Russia seeking—through force—to exert influence on a neighboring country. That is not how international law is supposed to operate.

I would also note, just the way that some of this has been reported, that there's a suggestion somehow that the Russian actions have been clever strategically. I actually think that this has not been a sign of strength, but rather, is a reflection that countries near Russia have deep concerns and suspicions about this kind of meddling, and if anything, it will push many countries further away from Russia.

There is the ability for Ukraine to be a friend of the West's and a friend of Russia's as long as none of us are inside of Ukraine trying to meddle and intervene—certainly not militarily—with decisions that properly belong to the Ukrainian people. And that's the principle that John Kerry is going to be speaking to during his visit. I'll be making additional calls today to some of our key foreign partners, and I suspect I'll be doing that all week and in through the weekend.

But as I indicated yesterday, the course of history is for people to want to be free to make their own decisions about their own futures. And the international community, I think, is unified in believing that it is not the role of an outside force—where there's been no evidence of serious violence, where there's been no rationale under international law—to intervene in people trying to determine their own destiny.

So we stand on the side of history that I think more and more people around the world deeply believe in: the principle that a sovereign people, an independent people are able to make their own decisions about their own lives. And Mr. Putin can throw a lot of words out there, but the facts on the ground indicate that right now he's not abiding by that principle. There is still the opportunity for Russia to do so, working with the international community to help stabilize the situation.

And we've sent a clear message that we are prepared to work with anybody if their genuine interest is making sure that Ukraine is able to govern itself. And as I indicated before—and something that I think has not been emphasized enough—they are currently scheduled to have elections in May. And everybody in the international community should be invested in making sure that the economic deterioration that's happened in Ukraine stops, but also that these elections proceed in a fair and free way in which all Ukrainians, including Russian speakers inside of Ukraine, are able to express their choice of who should lead them.

And if we have a strong, robust, legitimate election, then there shouldn't be any question as to whether the Ukrainian people are—govern themselves without the kinds of outside interference that we see Russia exerting.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:38 a.m. at Powell Elementary School.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in McLean, Virginia

March 4, 2014

Thank you. Well, it is great to see a whole bunch of old friends and a few new ones, and I just want to thank Lynda and Chuck and the Robb family for opening this up—this beautiful home for us, and more importantly, for their extraordinary service to our country. They've been amazing public servants and obviously represent a legacy of public service for a very long time.

To Michael Bennet, thank you for—where'd Michael go? Thank you for taking on this thankless task. But I can tell you, Michael is as talented, smart, and effective a Senator as we have, and for him to also do what he's doing to help make sure that we succeed in the Senate is extraordinary. And then you've got two of the best Senators in the country in Tim Kaine, who I know had to take off, and Mark Warner. And I got a chance to know Mark when he was a Governor, and he had more control over his schedule than he does now. [*Laughter*] And I know he misses being Governor, but I also know that he applies the same dedication and intelligence and compassion to his current job as he did in his previous one. So you guys are lucky in Virginia.

I'm going to be very quick on the front end in terms of remarks because I want to spend most of my time answering questions and hearing from you. We obviously live in just a remarkable time. A lot of the focus today and over the last several weeks has been on international affairs, and I'll be happy to give you more details of what's happening in Ukraine.

The essence of it is, is we have a country that has been in a difficult situation for quite some time, that had a President that was closely associated with the Russians, who a large segment of the Ukrainian population did not feel was representing them well, although he had been democratically elected. You had a crisis inside of Ukraine as a consequence of his decision not to sign an agreement that would have oriented their economy a little more towards the West. That got out of control, and we got involved only to prevent initially from bloodshed occurring inside the country and succeeded in doing that. But ultimately, a deal that was brokered for a power-sharing arrangement in an election led to him fleeing, and we now have a situation in which the Russians, I think, are engaging in a fundamental breach of international law in sending troops into the country to try to force the hands of the Ukrainian people. We may be able to deescalate over the next several days and weeks, but it's a serious situation, and we're spending a lot of time on it.

In some ways, it reflects a broader trend around the world, which is, authoritarian regimes, ineffective regimes, corrupt regimes are, in this age of social media, having a much harder time clinging on to power. At the same time, in many of these societies, you don't have strong traditions of civil society and organization that allow orderly transfers of power, and that makes for an often chaotic situation. And part of what we have to navigate—not just this year or next year, but for years to come, not just in the Middle East, but around the world—is going to be our ability to help countries provide a voice for people who have previously been voiceless; to allow them to determine their own destiny, but to do it with some humility, recognizing that in each of these societies, we're not going to be able to impose order. We're going to have to work with these communities and the international community on the basis of some core principles.

And the central principle is that each individual is worth something, means something—their dreams, hopes, and aspirations matter—and that they should have a voice in the direction of their lives and they should be able to, if they work hard, aspire to some semblance of security and prosperity. And that's obviously a reflection of who we are as Americans. And one of my main jobs as President, ever since I came into office, is how well are we abiding by that ideal here in this country. Obviously, we've got a political system that, for all its

flaws, is a well-developed democracy, and transfers of power occur in an orderly fashion, and there's competition of ideas between the parties. And having come out of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, we now have an economy that is growing, and we've created 8.5 million new jobs and manufacturing is coming back in a way that we have not seen since the 1990s.

And all that's good news, but part of the reason that I ran for office, part of the reason, I think, Mark and Michael and others ran for office, is because we strongly believe that it's not enough for the economy to grow in and of itself. It's also important that everybody is able to share in that growth, that if you work hard and you are responsible, that you can get ahead in this country, that it doesn't matter what you look like, where you come from, how you started off, you can succeed.

And everything we try to do from expanding early childhood education to making sure that work pays through our tax system in a way that helps middle class families, to investing in research and development that allows us to keep our innovative edge, to making college more affordable—all these things are designed to uphold the principle, A, we need to grow, but, B, we need to make sure that if you're willing to work hard and take responsibility, you are a part of that growth.

And the trend lines over the last several decades were that even when the economy was growing, folks at the very top did well and a whole bunch of folks were treading water. We're starting to reverse that, but we've got a lot more work to do. And if you look at the Senate's agenda not just this year, but over the last 4 years, what you've seen are Senators who are committed to raising the minimum wage; Senators who are committed to rebuilding our infrastructure and putting people back to work; Senators who are committed to basic research and science; Senators who are committed to making sure we've got a tax system that works for middle class families and folks who are willing to work hard to get into the middle class.

I know the Democrats in our Senate, and they're not a dogmatic bunch. They're interested in what works. They believe deeply in the environment, and they care deeply about climate change. But they also recognize that we need to grow. And so they're interested in how do we work together to both affirm our commitment to passing on to the next generation a planet that is as extraordinary as the one that we inherited from our parents and grandparents, but doing it in a way that's creating jobs and clean energy and doing it in a way that's allowing business to compete around the world.

They care deeply about making sure that we're doing something about folks who are trapped in poverty, but they also recognize that the paths we create are going to demand something from everybody. And we don't want handouts, we just want to give these folks hands up so that they can apply themselves and enjoy the dignity of work.

So the problem, of course, is that the party on the other side, although patriotic and oftentimes individually good people and folks who care about their families, have a different set of ideas. And those ideas have proven not to work. And what's also happened is, there's a segment of our loyal opposition that basically thinks that Government has no role to play whatsoever in anything and have been spending most of their time trying to obstruct and grind the wheels of Government to a halt rather than figuring out how do we make things work better and more efficiently and provide the kinds of tools that people need in order to succeed.

So the choice in this should be pretty clear. And all I want to do is just emphasize the degree to which everything that you all care about—advancing every issue that is of deep concern to you—depends on us successfully maintaining Democratic control of the Senate. If you care about the environment, you better hope that folks like Mark and Michael are still in the majority. If you care about women getting equal pay for equal work or having control over their health care decisions or who is in the Supreme Court determining those laws, you better hope Democrats stay in the Senate. If

you care about making sure that we're investing in early childhood education and continuing to reform our schools to make them serve every child, you better make sure that we still have Democrats in control of the Senate. And that's why this is so important to me.

So the good news is, we've got great candidates. Michael has done an extraordinary job recruiting. I think the DSCC is doing a very good job in fielding a wonderful team on the ground. And I'm going to spend a lot of time and a lot of energy out there working on behalf of Democratic candidates. But we're going to need you. We cannot do this alone.

And the last thing I'll say about Democrats, we are really good at Presidential elections these days, if I do say so myself. [*Laughter*] And as a corollary to that, we're good at Senate and House elections during Presidential years. It's something about midterms. I don't know what it is about us. We get a little sleepy; we get a little distracted. We don't turn out to vote. We don't fund campaigns as passionately. That has to change and has got to change right here, because too much is at stake for us to let this opportunity slip by.

So I hope that you come away from this dinner—and I thank you for everything that you're doing on behalf of our outstanding Democratic Senate candidates—but I hope you come away understanding the stakes and feeling the same passion I do about getting this done this year. This year is really, really important. The last time we had a midterm in a very difficult situation is we were right at the very trough of the recession, we paid a dear price for not paying enough attention to these midterm elections. We cannot repeat that same mistake this year. So thank you very much for everything you're doing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:26 p.m. at the residence of former Sen. Charles S. Robb and his wife Lynda Johnson Robb. In his remarks, he referred to former President Viktor Yanukovych of Ukraine, who left the country after being removed from office in February by a vote in Parliament. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the White House Press Pool in New Britain, Connecticut
March 5, 2014

Well, I'll have a chance to talk to everybody a little bit later, but obviously, part of the reason that we're here is because we've got a group of outstanding Democratic Governors here in the Northwest [Northeast]* that are committed to making sure that work pays.

And we were just talking to the owners of this establishment, who pay their employees more than the minimum wage because, as the owner put it, he knows what it's like to work all his life and understands that if people are working hard, they shouldn't be in poverty and that we should be able to do everything we can to make sure that happens.

And Dan Malloy here in Connecticut is making this a top priority. I know Pete Shumlin, Lincoln Chafee, and Deval Patrick are all working with Tom Perez, our Secretary of Labor. And this is one—an important tool for us to help create more pathways into the middle class and make sure that if you work hard in this country, you can succeed.

There are other tools that are reflected in my budget, like the earned-income tax credit expansion that we've proposed that will also make a difference. But I'm just very proud of these Governors for the work they're doing. So thank you.

All right. So with that, let me eat.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1 p.m. at Café Beauregard. In his remarks, he referred to Robert P. Chiovoloni and Alice A. Bruno, owners, Café Beauregard; Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut; Gov. Peter E. Shumlin of Vermont; Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee of Rhode Island; and Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts.

* White House correction.

Remarks at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain
March 5, 2014

The President. Hello, Connecticut! Go Blue Devils! [*Laughter*] It is good to be back in Connecticut. I want to thank your wonderful Governor, Dan Malloy, for that introduction. I want to thank your president, Jack Miller, for inviting me here today.

We've got members of your student government behind me. You know, the—I couldn't help but notice your Student Government Association logo, which has a gavel and a pitchfork, which is pretty intense. [*Laughter*] And I wish some folks in Congress used the gavel more. [*Laughter*] Less pitchfork. [*Laughter*]

We also have some members of your nonstudent government. One of our finest members of our Cabinet, who just cares so much about working families and is working tirelessly every single day, Secretary of Labor Tom Perez is here. We've got all five of Connecticut's Representatives in Congress, including CCSU alum John Larson, in the house. Another proud CCSU alum, Erin Stewart, your mayor, is here, along with Mayor Segarra and the other mayors and legislators from all across Connecticut.

And today we're doing something a little different than usual. Usually, when I hit the road and talk with folks like all of you, I've got a Governor with me. But you are special. So we decided one Governor wasn't enough. [*Laughter*] So in addition to Governor Malloy, we've got Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, Deval Patrick of Massachusetts, Peter Shumlin of Vermont. This is like a Governor supergroup. [*Laughter*] It's like the Justice League of Governors. [*Laughter*] I'd call them the New England Patriots, but that name is already taken. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. I love you back! I love you. Now—but we can't just spend the whole day talking about how we love each other. [*Laughter*] That's not why I came. We are here today because each of us cares deeply about creating new jobs and new opportunities for all Americans. And we're at this interesting moment in our economy. Our economy has been growing. Our businesses have created 8½ million new jobs over the past 4 years. The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in over 5 years. Those are all things that we should be proud of.

But there are some trends out there that have been battering the middle class for a long, long time, well before this great recession hit. And in some ways, some of those trends have gotten worse, not better. The nature of today's economy with technology and globalization means that there are folks at the top who are doing better than ever, but average wages have barely budged. Average incomes have not gone up. Too many Americans are working harder than ever just to keep up.

So as I said at my State of the Union Address, we've got to reverse those trends. It is a central task for all of us to build an economy that works for everybody, not just for some. That's what every one of these Governors and Tom Perez believes in. That's what we got into public service for. I hope Dan and Peter don't mind me sharing this: While we were driving over here, they were talking about the fact that when they were growing up, both of them had dyslexia. And because of this—the incredible, fierce love of their parents, but also because there were some folks there to help them, they achieved these—made these extraordinary achievements. Now, I wasn't in the car with Deval, but Deval is a close friend of mine. He's got a similar story, grew up on the South Side of Chicago——

Audience member. Whoo!

The President. South Side! [*Laughter*] And came from a very modest background. But somebody gave him a chance. Me, Tom Perez, so many of us understand that at the heart of America, the central premise of this country is the chance to achieve your dreams if you work hard, if you take responsibility; that it doesn't matter where you start, it's where you finish.

And in America, we believe in opportunity for all. We believe that our success shouldn't

be determined by the circumstances of our birth. It's determined by each of us. But also by a society that's committed to everybody succeeding. So that it doesn't matter what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is, who you love, what matters is the strength of your work ethic and the power of your dreams and your willingness to take responsibility for yourself, but also for the larger society. That's what makes America the place that it is, why it continues to be a beacon, attracting people from all around the world, the idea that you can make it here if you try.

Now, there's been a lot of news about foreign affairs around the world over the last several days, but also for the last couple years. And one of the things that you see, a trend you see—it doesn't matter whether it's in Central Europe or in the Middle East or Africa—individuals want a chance to make it if they try. And what makes us special is, we already do that when we're at our best. But we've got some work to do to match up our ideals with the reality that's happening on the ground right now.

And the opportunity agenda that I've laid out is designed to help us restore that idea of opportunity for everybody for this generation: the generation of young people who are studying here and are about to enter the workforce. And it's got four parts. Part one is something that I know the seniors here are very interested in, which is more good jobs that pay good wages.

We can't be satisfied with just recovering the jobs that were lost during the recession. We've got to rebuild our economy so it's creating a steady supply of good jobs today and well into the future, jobs in high-tech manufacturing and in energy and in exports and in American innovation. So that's job number one.

Job number two is training more Americans with the skills they need to fill those good jobs so that our workforce is prepared for the jobs of tomorrow. Part three: guaranteeing every young person in this country access to a world-class education, from pre-K all the way to a college education like the one you're getting here.

And that's why over the past 5 years, working with the outstanding congressional delegation from Connecticut, we've been able to make sure that grant dollars are going farther than before. We took on a student loan system that gave billions of taxpayer dollars to the big banks, and we said let's use those to give more students directly the help they need to afford to go to college.

That's why we're offering millions of young people the chance to cap their monthly student loan payments at 10 percent of their income. So you need to check that out. Go to the website of the Department of Education and find out how you may be eligible for that.

And today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before. Of course—and I know your president won't disagree with this—we've also got to do more to rein in the soaring costs of college and help more Americans who are trapped by student loan debt. The bottom line, though, is whether it's technical training, community college, 4-year university, no young person should be priced out of a higher education. [*Applause*] Shouldn't happen.

Now, there is a fourth part of this agenda. By the way, I just noticed, if you've got chairs, feel free to sit down. [*Laughter*] I know the folks here don't have chairs, but I don't want you—and if you're standing up, make sure to bend your knees so you don't faint, you know. [*Laughter*] All right, I just wanted to check on you. [*Laughter*]

Now, point number four, the fourth component of this opportunity agenda, is making sure that if you are working hard, then you get ahead. And that means making sure women receive equal pay for equal work. When women succeed, America succeeds. I believe that. You happy with that, Rosa? Rosa agrees with that. [*Laughter*]

It means making sure that you can save and retire with dignity. It means health insurance that's there when you're sick and you need it most. And you guys are doing a great job implementing the Affordable Care Act here in Connecticut. If any of you know a young person who is uninsured, help them get covered at healthcare.gov. The website works just fine now. [*Laughter*] They've got until March 31 to sign up, and in some cases, it's going to cost

less than your cell phone bill. So check it out, healthcare.gov.

And making work pay means wages and paychecks that let you support a family. [*Applause*] A wage, a paycheck that lets you support a family.

Now, I want to be clear about this because sometimes in our debates with our friends on the other side of the political spectrum, this may not be clear, so let me just repeat it once again. As Americans, we understand that some folks are going to earn more than others. We don't resent success, we are thrilled with the opportunities that America affords. Somebody goes out there, starts a business, invents a new product, provides a new service, that's what drives our economy. That's why this free market economy is the most dynamic on Earth. We're thrilled with that. Everybody agrees on that. But what we also believe is that nobody who works full time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. That violates a basic sense of who we are. And that's why it's time to give America a raise. It is time to give America a raise. [*Applause*] Now is the time. Now is the time.

A year ago I asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, the Federal minimum wage. Since that time, six States have passed laws to raise theirs, including right here in Connecticut. On January 1, tens of thousands of folks across this State got a raise, and Governor Malloy is working to lift their wages even higher. Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Washington State, other States, counties, cities across the country are working to raise their minimum wage as we speak.

The Governors here today—Governor Chafee of Rhode Island, Governor Malloy, Governor Patrick of Massachusetts, Governor Shumlin of Vermont—and a Governor who couldn't be here today, Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire—all are fighting to give hard-working folks in these great New England States a raise of their own. And they've formed a regional coalition to raise the minimum wage. If they succeed in their efforts, New England will have some of the highest minimum wages in the country.

And they're not stopping there. These four Governors are here to—in support of raising America's minimum wage, the Federal minimum wage, to $10.10 an hour—$10.10 an hour.

Now, raising wages is not just a job for elected officials. In my State of the Union Address, I asked more business leaders to do what they can to raise their workers' wages, because profitable companies like Costco have long seen higher wages as good business. It's a smart way to boost productivity, to reduce turnover, to instill loyalty in your employees. And by the way, they do great. Their stocks do great. They are highly profitable. It's not bad business to do right by your workers, it's good business. [*Applause*] It's good business.

Two weeks ago, the Gap decided to raise its base wages, and that's going to boost wages for 65,000 workers in the United States. Last week, I read about Jaxson's; it's an ice cream parlor in Florida that's been in business since 1956. They just announced they would lift workers' wages to at least $10.10 an hour, without cutting back on hiring. Two weeks ago, an Atlanta small-business owner named Darien Southerland wrote me to share a lesson his granny taught him: If you treat your employees right, they'll treat you right. Vice President Biden paid Darien's business a visit just yesterday. You've got to listen to your grandmother. [*Laughter*] That is some wise advice.

And I agree with these business leaders as well. So what I did as President, I issued an Executive order requiring Federal contractors: If you're doing business with the Federal Government, pay your employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour, which will be good for America's bottom line.

And let me tell you who was affected. I did—when I was signing the bill—or the Executive order, we had some of the workers who were going to be affected. You've got folks who are cooking the meals of our troops or washing their dishes or cleaning their clothes. This country should pay those folks a wage you can live on.

So this is good for business, it is good for America. Because even though we're bringing

manufacturing jobs back to the United States, creating more good jobs in education and health care and business services, there will always be airport workers, there are always going to be fast-food workers, there are always going to be hospital workers, there are going to be retail salespeople, hospitality workers, people who work their tails off every day. People working in nursing homes, looking after your grandparents or your parents. Folks who are doing all the hard jobs that make our society work every single day. They don't have anything flashy out there. And you know what, they're not expecting to get rich, but they do feel like, if they're putting in back-breaking work every day, then at least at the end of the month, they can pay their bills.

Audience member. I know that's right!

The President. They deserve an honest day's pay for an honest day's work.

Working Americans have struggled through stagnant wages for too long, so my goal is—and the goal of everybody on this stage—is to help lift wages, help lift take-home pay in any way we can. And that's why I've done everything I can to lift wages for hard-working Federal contractors. It's why I've asked business owners to raise their wages. It's why I'm supporting elected officials at the local level, Governors. What every American wants is a paycheck that lets them support their families, know a little economic security, pass down some hope and optimism to their kids. And that's worth fighting for. So—[*applause*].

But I want to make one last point. If we're going to finish the job, Congress has to get on board. [*Applause*] Congress has to get on board. And this is interesting. This should not be that hard, you'd think. [*Laughter*] Because nearly three in four Americans, about half of all Republicans, support raising the minimum wage. The problem is, Republicans in Congress oppose raising the minimum wage. Now, I don't know if that's just because I proposed it. [*Laughter*] Maybe I should say I oppose raising the minimum wage and they'd be for it. That's possible. [*Laughter*]

But right now there's a bill in front of both the House and the Senate that would boost America's minimum wage to $10.10. Ten—it's easy to remember: 10–10. Ten dollars, ten cents an hour. Just passing this bill would help not only minimum wage workers; it would lift wages for about 200,000 people just right here in Connecticut. It would lift wages for about 1 million New Englanders. It would lift wages for nearly 28 million Americans across this country. It would immediately raise millions of people out of poverty. It would help millions more work their way out of poverty, and it doesn't require new taxes, doesn't require new spending, doesn't require some new bureaucracy. And here's one last point: It turns out, what happens if workers got a little more money in their pockets?

Audience members. They spend it!

The President. They spend a little more money, which means that suddenly, businesses have more customers, which means they make more profits, which means they can hire more workers, which means you get a virtuous cycle——

Audience member. It's common sense!

The President. It's common sense. That's what I'm trying to say. That's all I'm trying to say. [*Laughter*] Common sense, exactly. That's all. It's just common sense. That's all it is. It's common sense. [*Applause*] Common sense. It's just common sense. That's all I'm saying. [*Laughter*]

Now, right now Republicans in Congress don't want to vote on raising the minimum wage. Some have actually said they just want to scrap the minimum wage. They—one of them said, "I think it's outlived its usefulness. . . . I'd vote to repeal the minimum wage." One of them said it's "never worked." Now—some even said it only helps young people. Now—as if that's a bad thing; I think we should want to help young people. [*Laughter*] I'd like to see them try putting themselves through college on a low-wage work-study job. But actually—or I'd like to see them supporting a family making less than $15,000 a year.

But here's the truth about who it would help. Most people who would get a raise if we raise the minimum wage are not teenagers on their first job. Their average age is 35. A majority of lower wage jobs are held by women.

These Americans are working full time, often supporting families, and if the minimum wage had kept pace with our economy's productivity, they'd already be earning well over $10 an hour. Today. Instead, it's stuck at $7.25. Every time Congress refuses to raise it, it loses value because the cost of living goes higher, minimum wage stays the same. Right now it's worth 20-percent less than it was when Ronald Reagan took office. And since—over the last year, since I asked Congress to do something and they didn't do it, that was an equivalent of a $200 pay cut for the average minimum wage worker, because it didn't keep pace with inflation. That's a month of groceries for the average minimum wage worker. That's 2 months' worth of electricity. This is not a small thing, this is a big deal. It makes a big difference in the lives of a lot of families.

So Members of Congress have a choice to make. It is a clear choice: Raise workers' wages, grow our economy, or let wages stagnate further, give workers what amounts to another pay cut. Fortunately, folks in Connecticut have really a good delegation, so your Senators and Representatives are already on board. They're all on board. They're fighting the good fight. But anybody who is watching at home, you deserve to know where your elected official stands. So just ask them, "Do you support raising the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour?" If they say yes, say, "Thanks." [*Laughter*] "Great job." We need encouragement too, elected officials. [*Laughter*] If they say no, you should be polite—[*laughter*]—but you should say, "Why not?" Ask them to reconsider. Ask them to side with the majority of Americans. Instead of saying no, for once, say yes. It's time for $10.10. It's time to give America a raise.

I want to close by sharing a story of a guy named Doug Wade, who is here today. Where's Doug? I'm going to embarrass Doug. Stand up. There's Doug, right here. Doug had a chance to meet Secretary Perez in Hartford last week. Doug is the president of Wade's Dairy down in Bridgeport. So his great-grandfather Frank—is that right? Frank?—started the family business in 1893—1893. One of the secrets to their success is that they treat their employees like part of the family. So Doug pays his own workers fairly.

But he goes a step further than that. He writes editorials, he talks to fellow business leaders, he meets with elected officials to make the case for a higher minimum wage for everybody. And keep in mind, Doug spent most of his life as a registered Republican. This is not about politics, this is about common sense. It's about business sense. And Doug, we were talking backstage, Doug showed me a paystub because he—it describes his own story. When he was flipping burgers back in 1970, his employer paid him the minimum wage, but it went 25-percent farther than it does today. So Doug speaks from experience when he says that "Things like the minimum wage raise the bar for everybody." And he's still got that paycheck. And it looks like the paycheck I got when I was working at Baskin-Robbins. [*Laughter*]

The point that Doug and his family and his business represents is, we believe in hard work, we believe in responsibility, we believe in individual initiative, but we also come together to raise the bar for everybody; to make sure our fellow citizens can pursue their own dreams as well; that they can look after their kids and lift them up. We look out for each other. That's who we are. That is our story.

There are millions of Americans like Doug, and like all of you, who are tired of the old political arguments, ready to raise the bar a little higher. Let's move this country forward. Let's move it up. Let's go further. That's what I'm going to do as President as long as I have the honor of serving in this office, and I need your help. Let's go out there and give America a raise. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the William H. Detrick Gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Reps. Joe Courtney, Rosa L. DeLauro, Elizabeth H. Esty, and James Himes; Mayor Pedro E. Segarra of Hartford, CT; Darien J. Southerland, chief strategy officer, BG Ad Group; Rep. Joseph L. Barton; and Sen. Marco A. Rubio. He also referred to Executive Order 13658, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Observance of Ash Wednesday
March 5, 2014

Today Michelle and I join our fellow Christians in the United States and around the world in marking Ash Wednesday. Lent is a season of reflection, repentance, and renewal, a chance to recommit to loving and serving one another and to deepen our faith in preparation for the Easter celebration to come.

Statement on the Senate's Failure To Confirm Debo P. Adegbile as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights
March 5, 2014

The Senate's failure to confirm Debo Adegbile to lead the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice is a travesty based on wildly unfair character attacks against a good and qualified public servant. Mr. Adegbile's qualifications are impeccable. He represents the best of the legal profession, with wide-ranging experience and the deep respect of those with whom he has worked. His unwavering dedication to protecting every American's civil and constitutional rights under the law—including voting rights—could not be more important right now. And Mr. Adegbile's personal story—rising from adversity to become someone who President Bush's Solicitor General referred to as one of the Nation's most capable litigators—is a story that proves what America has been and can be for people who work hard and play by the rules. As a lawyer, Mr. Adegbile has played by the rules. And now Washington politics have used the rules against him. The fact that his nomination was defeated solely based on his legal representation of a defendant runs contrary to a fundamental principle of our system of justice, and those who voted against his nomination denied the American people an outstanding public servant.

NOTE: The statement referred to former President George W. Bush; former U.S. Solicitor General Paul D. Clement; and Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was convicted for the 1981 murder of Philadelphia, PA, police officer Daniel Faulkner.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Boston, Massachusetts
March 5, 2014

Thank you. Hello! Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. First of all, I love Deval Patrick, and Massachusetts has been extraordinarily fortunate to have him as your Governor. And I believe that. And I'm fortunate to have him as a friend. And if you look at the track record of what's happened in Massachusetts, then it's a testimony in terms of jobs and growth and infrastructure and progress on schools. It's all a testimony to Deval's ability to bring people together and get them working on behalf of the Commonwealth.

You are also lucky to have an outstanding young new mayor, replacing an outstanding older mayor. I don't think Tom would object to me characterizing him that way. But all reports are, Marty Walsh is doing just a great job. So congratulations for your efforts.

A couple of former public servants who have not given up engaging in public service, one of them a great friend and a great Governor, who is actually an import, but did extraordinary work in Ohio, is teaching here now at Harvard. But very proud to call him a friend: Ted Strickland is here, former Governor of Ohio. And

somebody who I've known for a long time, is just a good, kind man who cares deeply about all people—and some of that frankly is inherited, and some of it is just unique to who he is, and he's got just an extraordinary family—former Congressman Patrick Kennedy. Where's Patrick? There he is over there.

[*At this point, former Rep. Kennedy held up his son Owen.*]

Yes! The newest member—some new members of the Kennedy clan, right there. [*Laughter*] When are you running? Isn't that how that works? [*Laughter*] Absolutely.

So Deval said it well, and I want to spend most of my time in conversation as opposed to just giving a long speech. We are in this remarkable, tumultuous time, and because the world is changing rapidly in almost every respect, it can be scary, and it can make folks anxious. But I am so extraordinarily hopeful about this country of ours.

When I took office, we were in the midst of crisis. We've now seen over 4 years of economic growth. We've seen 8.5 million new jobs created. We've seen the housing market bounce back. We've seen an auto industry that has come roaring back. We've seen manufacturing return for the first time since the 1990s. There has been an extraordinary energy boom, both in traditional energy sources and clean energy, at the same time as we've reduced our carbon emissions more than any other nation on Earth during this period.

We've made progress on school reform. We have made sure that every American is able to get access to health insurance, something that Presidents from both parties have fought for, for almost 100 years. And the country has moved decisively in the direction of justice when it comes to the LGBT community. We've gone—more to do, but the trends are inexorable.

We see in our children and in our grandchildren greater tolerance, greater willingness to work with other people, desire for service. We've got the best universities in the world. We've got the best workforce in the world. We've got the best scientists in the world. We have all the ingredients to make sure the 21st century is an American century just like the 20th.

And yet folks are anxious, because in the midst of all this, there's also great change. And what I've tried to do as President—the President of all people, but also as the leader of the party, as a Democrat—is to make sure that we're translating old, tried-and-true values into policies that meet the challenges of this time of change.

And at the heart of it, the heart of who we are as Americans, but also who we are as Democrats, as the party of Jefferson and FDR and JFK, is the simple premise that everybody in this country, if they work hard, can get ahead; that everybody has a chance to live out their dreams; that opportunity is there for the taking if you work hard, if you are responsible. It doesn't matter the circumstances into which you are born. It doesn't matter if you're born on the South Side of Chicago and your grandpa was a janitor or if you're born in Hawaii to a teenage mom who ends up raising you without a dad. It doesn't matter. You've got a shot if you're willing to work hard. And we as a society are going to create a platform and provide the tools to make sure people can succeed.

That's the idea. That's what makes me a proud American and an proud Democrat. And part of the change that has made folks anxious is they're not sure whether that still holds true, whether the trend lines are going to allow us to sustain that. And so what I've been talking about since I was first elected to this office, what I talked about in getting reelected, and what I talked about in this year's State of the Union and what I talked about today and what I'm going to be talking about tomorrow and for the next 3 years of my Presidency is, how do we make sure we're advancing policies that assure those ideals are alive and well not just now, but for future generations?

So whether it's creating more good jobs or making sure our workers are trained for those jobs, or making sure that every child is getting a world-class education, or making sure that work pays in this society, or making sure that people are not discriminated against on the ba-

sis of race or religion or sexual orientation, or making sure that we have an immigration system that is just and can advance our economy, or making sure that we have an energy policy that is visionary and doesn't just look to the past, but looks to the future, and also make sure that we are good stewards of this planet—all these policies come down to me insisting that it is within our means, within our power, to pass on this wonderful gift, this idea of opportunity for all, to the next generation.

And it turns out, most of these ideas garner majority support out in the country. When I talk about minimum wage, not only is it good policy, but the majority of the country, including half of Republicans, agree with it. You go into a room, I don't care how conservative a county, and you ask, "Do you want your daughters to be treated the same on the job as your sons?"—everybody is going to say yes.

But our political system is not reflecting that consensus, and that's what we are fighting for. And that's why these midterms are so important, as Deval said. I won't go through a litany of the challenges we've had with a certain set of Republicans in Congress that have then set the tone for the entire party, because it's not uniform. When you talk to them privately, there are still folks in that party who long to get stuff done and work in a bipartisan basis, but they're intimidated by the "say no" crowd.

But we have to recognize that part of it is up to us. It's not just on them. In the midterms, Democrats too often don't vote. Too often, when there's not a Presidential election, we don't think it's sexy, we don't think it's interesting. People tune out. And because the electorate has changed, we get walloped. It's happened before, and it could happen again if we do not fight on behalf of the things we care about in this election, not keeping our eye to the next election. And nobody is going to be more invested than me in having a Democrat succeed me, to consolidate and solidify the gains that we've made during my Presidency. But right now we've got to make sure we're fighting in this election.

And the DNC helps. The DNC can make sure that instead of restricting the franchise for people all across the country, it's expanded. The DNC can make sure that the message we're talking about on minimum wage or equal pay or immigration reform gets out there and people hear it and they recognize how that can have an impact on their own lives.

So I'm going to need you. I'm going to put Deval to work—[*laughter*]—and I'm going to be asking the mayor to perhaps travel to some places. But most importantly, we're going to need a lot of young people who are out there fanning all across the country, working hard, just like they did in 2008, just like they did in 2012. And your efforts make a huge difference.

So I hope that just because I'm not on the ballot that people aren't going to take it easy this time. Because the ideas I care about and am fighting for are on the ballot. The progress we've made is on the ballot. The things that Deval has fought for here in Massachusetts are on the ballot. The things that Ted Strickland fought for when he was in Ohio and Patrick Kennedy fought for when it comes to mental health services, those things, they're all on the ballot. This counts. And I'm going to need you guys to step up, send a message to your friends and people who profess to care about these ideas: They better get involved this time out.

All right. Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:48 p.m. at the Artists for Humanity EpiCenter. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, MA. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the Situation in Ukraine
March 6, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. Before Jay takes some of your questions, I wanted to provide a brief update on our efforts to address the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

Since the Russian intervention, we've been mobilizing the international community to condemn this violation of international law and to support the people and Government of Ukraine. This morning I signed an Executive order that authorizes sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine or for stealing the assets of the Ukrainian people.

According to my guidance, the State Department has also put in place restrictions on the travel of certain individuals and officials. These decisions continue our efforts to impose a cost on Russia and those responsible for the situation in Crimea. And they also give us the flexibility to adjust our response going forward based on Russia's actions.

We took these steps in close coordination with our European allies. I've spoken to several of our closest friends around the world, and I'm pleased that our international unity is on display at this important moment. Already, we've moved together to announce substantial assistance for the Government in Kiev, and today in Brussels, our allies took similar steps to impose costs on Russia. I am confident that we are moving forward together, united in our determination to oppose actions that violate international law and to support the Government and people of Ukraine.

And that includes standing up for the principle of state sovereignty. The proposed referendum on the future of Crimea would violate the Ukrainian Constitution and violate international law. Any discussion about the future of Ukraine must include the legitimate Government of Ukraine. In 2014, we are well beyond the days when borders can be redrawn over the heads of democratic leaders.

While we take these steps, I want to be clear that there is also a way to resolve this crisis that respects the interests of the Russian Federation, as well as the Ukrainian people. Let international monitors into all of Ukraine, including Crimea, to ensure the rights of all Ukrainians are being respected, including ethnic Russians. Begin consultations between the Government of Russia and Ukraine, with the participation of the international community. Russia would maintain its basing rights in Crimea, provided that it abides by its agreements and respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. And the world should support the people of Ukraine as they move to elections in May.

That's the path of deescalation, and Secretary Kerry is engaged in discussions with all of the relevant parties, including Russia and Ukraine, to pursue that path. But if this violation of international law continues, the resolve of the United States and our allies and the international community will remain firm. Meanwhile, we've taken steps to reaffirm our commitment to the security and democracy of our allies in Eastern Europe and to support the people of Ukraine.

One last point: There's been a lot of talk in Congress about these issues. Today, once again, I'm calling on Congress to follow up on these words with action, specifically to support the IMF's capacity to lend resources to Ukraine and to provide American assistance for the Ukrainian Government so that they can weather this storm and stabilize their economy, make needed reforms, deliver for their people, all of which will provide a smoother pathway for the elections that have already been scheduled in May.

Today the world can see that the United States is united with our allies and partners in upholding international law and pursuing a just outcome that advances global security and the future that the Ukrainian people deserve. That's what we're going to continue to do in the days to come until we have seen a resolution to this crisis.

Thanks very much. And Jay and Ben and others will be happy to take your questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney; and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes. He also referred to Executive Order 13660, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine

March 6, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in Ukraine.

The order does not target the country of Ukraine, but rather is aimed at persons—including persons who have asserted governmental authority in the Crimean region without the authorization of the Government of Ukraine—who undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets. The order blocks the property and interests in property and suspends entry into the United States of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have engaged in, directly or indirectly, any of the following:
  - actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in Ukraine;
  - actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine; or
  - misappropriation of state assets of Ukraine or of an economically significant entity in Ukraine;
- to have asserted governmental authority over any part or region of Ukraine without the authorization of the Government of Ukraine;
- to be a leader of an entity that has, or whose members have, engaged in any activity described above or of an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, any activity described above or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
March 6, 2014.

NOTE: The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Signing the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2014
March 6, 2014

Today I signed the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act into law. This bipartisan legislation ensures that the Federal Government can continue to provide timely, effective drought warning forecasts and vital support to communities that are vulnerable to drought. States, cities, towns, farmers, and businesses rely on tools and data from the National Integrated Drought Information System to make informed decisions about water use, crop planting, wildfire response, and other critical areas. As climate change increases the intensity of weather-related disasters such as droughts, wildfires, storms, and floods, providing access to updated drought-related science and tools is growing even more important.

Currently, a number of Western States are facing drought conditions, including a severe drought in California, and my administration is pursuing every measure to provide relief and support in partnership with States. To complement the National Integrated Drought Information System, as part of my Climate Action Plan, Federal agencies have also formed a National Drought Resilience Partnership to help communities better prepare for droughts in the long term and prevent the worst impacts on families and businesses. I commend Congress for passing this bipartisan bill to continue to build our national resilience to drought and help communities, farmers, businesses, and individuals better prepare and recover when disaster strikes.

NOTE: H.R. 2431, approved March 6, was assigned Public Law No. 113–86.

Remarks at PBS's "In Performance at the White House: Women of Soul"
March 6, 2014

Hello, everybody! Welcome to the White House for the latest in our series celebrating the music that has shaped our American story. And as someone who always shares this house with brilliant, creative, talented, somewhat stubborn women—[*laughter*]—I think Women's History Month is the perfect time to honor a few more: the Women of Soul.

This is a really good lineup. And I want to thank our performers for this evening. They are fantastic. We've got Tessanne Chin here. We've got Melissa Etheridge. We've got Aretha Franklin. We've got Ariana Grande. Miss Patti LaBelle. Janelle Monae. And Miss Jill Scott. That is a lineup. I can't wait. [*Laughter*]

Finally, I want to make a quick public service announcement. When Aretha Franklin first walked into Fame Studio in 1967, most of the other musicians had never heard her sing live before. When they did, one of them said: "The floors rumbled and the walls shook. My brain shook. It was magic." So my advice to everyone tonight is simple: Hang on. [*Laughter*] The Queen of Soul is in the building. If she blows your mind, it will be okay. [*Laughter*]

But that's what soul music does. It makes us move, and it makes us feel. To quote Jill Scott, "Soul music is about reaching and touching people on a human level."

For many of the performers here tonight, it all began on Sunday morning. Growing up in Detroit, Aretha sang at her father's church and recorded her first album at that church when she was just 14 years old. Patti LaBelle was painfully shy—I cannot believe that, but this is what I have been told—[*laughter*]—until she sang a solo in front of the congregation and got a standing ovation. That's when she realized she could do something special.

Eventually, artists like Aretha and Patti began mixing gospel with R&B and rock and pop. Instead of singing about love and pain, forgive-

ness and acceptance to a church audience, they sang about them to the world. And the world had never heard anything like it.

When Aretha first told us what "R–S–P–E–C–T"—[*laughter*]—meant to her, she had no idea it would become a rallying cry for African Americans and women and then everyone who felt marginalized because of what they looked like or who they loved. They wanted some respect. Later, when somebody asked her why it had such an impact, she said, "I guess everybody just wants a little respect." [*Laughter*]

Today, they still do. Aretha had already won 11 Grammys by the time Janelle Monae was born. But as a teenager struggling to make it in New York, Janelle worked as a maid, singing for the other women as they cleaned houses together. And she says the experience inspired her to write music for people like them, "because they need it the most."

And when Melissa Etheridge was growing up, she fell in love with artists who had something to say. She remembers thinking, "I can't wait until I get up there and sing the truth."

And ultimately, that's what soul is all about: telling some truth. And tonight we're in for a healthy dose of truth—[*laughter*]—from some of the finest voices there are.

So without further ado, I'd like to introduce a true American treasure, the one and only Miss Patti LaBelle.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:34 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Spooner Oldham, who played the organ on Aretha Franklin's original recording of "Respect."

Remarks to the White House Press Pool in Miami, Florida
March 7, 2014

One of the reasons we're down here, Michelle and I are both working on encouraging school districts to adopt some terrific stuff that's being done down here in order for young people to know if they've done the work, if they're being responsible, they're outstanding students, then financing should not be a barrier for them being able to go to college. And we just don't have enough information that's getting out there about how easy it is now to fill out the FAFSA form and other scholarships that are available. But this school district is doing some great work on it. So this is an example of where we want all our young people to be.

So great job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. in a classroom at Coral Reef Senior High School. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Coral Reef Senior High School in Miami
March 7, 2014

The President. Hey! Hello, Miami! Hello, 'Cuda Nation! Thank you. Hello! It is good to be here at Coral Reef Senior High. You guys are just happy because it's warm down here all the time. [*Laughter*] I don't know if you're aware of this, but the rest of the country is cold. [*Laughter*] Ha! Listen, the—Michelle and I are so grateful for the warm welcome. It is great to be here. I want to thank some people who are doing outstanding work.

First of all, your superintendent, Superintendent Carvalho, is doing great work. We're really proud of him. Your principal, Principal Leal, is doing great work. All the Coral Reef teachers and staff, you guys are all doing a great job. And you're doing what is necessary to help young people get ready for college and careers. So that's why we're here. We are proud of what's being done at this school.

I want to mention a few other folks who are here who are fighting on behalf of the people

of South Florida every day. We've got Congressman Joe Garcia is here. We've got Congresswoman Frederica Wilson here. We've got Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez. Your former Governor, Charlie Crist, is here.

And most of all, I want to thank the people that Michelle and I came all the way down here to see, and that is the students of Coral Reef. We had heard great things about your school. We had heard great things about the students. We wanted to come down here and just see what was going on. And Michelle just—Michelle and I just had a chance to visit with some of your classmates who are going through some of the scholarship applications, and we had a chance to talk to them and hear what their plans were. And first of all, Michelle and I looked, and we said, these must be actors playing students, because they were all smart and good-looking and organized. [*Laughter*] And you asked them, what are you going to do? And they're—well, I'm going to be applying to business school, and then I'm going to start a company, and then I—when I was your age, I didn't know what I was doing. I was lucky if I had gotten out of bed on time. [*Laughter*] So you guys are ahead of the game.

And we're here to tell you that you've got to keep up the good work, because by working hard every single day, every single night, you are making the best investment there is in your future. And we want to make sure you've got everything, all the tools you need to succeed. We want every young person to have the kinds of teachers and the kind of classes and the kind of learning experiences that are available to you here at Coral Reef. Because that's the best investment we can make in America's future.

Now, keep in mind, Michelle and I, we're only here today because of the kind of education that we got. That was our ticket to success. We grew up a lot like many of you. I was raised by a single mom; she was a teenager when I was born. We moved around a lot, and we did not have a lot of money. But the one thing she was determined to see was that my sister and I would get the best education possible.

And she would press me. Sometimes, she'd make me wake up, do my lessons before I even went to school. She was not going to let me off the hook. And at the time, I wasn't happy about it, but now I'm glad she pressed me like that. Because, thanks to my mother and my grandparents, and then great teachers and great counselors who encouraged me, and a country that made it possible for me to afford a higher education, I was able to go to college and law school.

And then when I met Michelle, I saw that—[*applause*]. There were a couple of things I noticed. I noticed she was smart. I noticed she was funny; she's funny, she's funnier than I am. [*Laughter*] Obviously, I noticed she was cute, yes. Obviously, I noticed that. [*Laughter*] But one of the things I also realized was, even though we had grown up in very different places, her story was a lot like mine. Her dad worked at a city water plant. He didn't go to college. He was a blue-collar worker. Michelle's mom—my mother-in-law, who I love to death—she was a secretary. No one in her family had gone to college. But because she had worked hard and her parents understood the value of education and she had great teachers and great opportunities and because the country was willing to invest to make sure that she was able to pay for college, she ended up going to some of the best universities in the country.

So the point is, she and I have been able to achieve things that our parents, our grandparents would have never dreamed of. And that's the chance this country should give every young person. That's the idea at the heart of America.

What makes this country great, what makes it special when you look around, and Miami is a great example of it, you've got people coming from everywhere, every background, every race, every faith. But what binds us together is this idea that if you work hard, you can make it, that there's opportunity for all. The belief that no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, if you are responsible and put in the effort, you can succeed. There's no limit to what you can do. That's what America is all about.

Opportunity is what drew many of your parents and grandparents to America. And we've got to restore that idea for your generation so that everybody has the same chance Michelle and I did. That's why we're working on what we call an opportunity agenda: to create more jobs and train more workers with new skills; to make sure hard work is rewarded with a paycheck that supports a family; to make sure that everybody can get health care when they need it so that nobody has to get into financial trouble because somebody in the family gets sick.

And for the students here, a lot of you, you may not think about these issues all the time. You're spending a lot of time on homework and sports and this and that. But you also oftentimes see your own family struggling, and you worry about it. And one of the single most important parts of our opportunity agenda is making sure that every young person in America has access to a world-class education—a world-class education. So that's why we are here.

I believe we should start teaching our kids at the earliest ages. So we're trying to help more States make high-quality preschool and other early learning programs available to the youngest kids. I believe that our K-through-12 system should be the best in the world. So we started a competition called Race to the Top to encourage more States like Florida to raise expectations for students like you, because when we set high expectations, every single one of you can meet them. You're recruiting and preparing the best teachers. You are turning around low-performing schools. You're expanding high-performing ones. You're making sure every student is prepared for college or a career.

I believe that every student should have the best technology. So we launched something we called ConnectED to connect our schools to high-speed Internet. And I want to congratulate Miami-Dade and your superintendent, because you have achieved your goal of installing Wi-Fi in every single one of your schools.

So the good news is, in part because of some of these reforms we've initiated, when you add it all up, our Nation's high school graduation rate is the highest on record. The dropout rate has been dropping, and among Latino students, it's been cut in half since 2000. Miami-Dade's graduation rate is higher than it's ever been. That's all because of the efforts of so many people, including the parents and students who have been putting in the effort. It's because of the teachers and administrators and staff who are doing such a great job. You should be proud. We're making progress. [*Applause*] We're making progress.

Yes, you guys—by the way, you can all sit down. I didn't realize everybody was still standing up. Sit down. Take a load off. You guys can't sit down, though, because you don't have chairs. You guys stay standing; although, bend your knees so you don't faint. [*Laughter*]

But here's the key thing, Coral Reef: We still have more work to do, all of us: elected officials, principals, teachers, parents, students. Because, as Michelle says, education is a two-way street. Folks like us have to work hard to give you the best schools and support that you need. But then you've got to hold up your end of the bargain by committing to your education. That means you've got to stretch your minds. You've got to push through subjects that aren't always easy. And it means continuing your education past high school, whether that's a 2-year or a 4-year college degree or getting some professional training.

So I want to talk about an easy step that high school students like you can take to make college a reality. And it's something you already know here at Coral Reef, but I'm speaking to all the young people out there who may be watching. It's called FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

It is a simple form. It used to be complicated; we made it simple. It doesn't cost anything. That's why it's—the word "free" is right there in the name. [*Laughter*] It does not take a long time to fill out. Once you do, you're putting yourself in the running for all kinds of financial support for college: scholarships, grants, loans, work-study jobs.

For the past 5 years, we've been working to make college more affordable. We took on a college loan system that gave billions of dollars

of taxpayer money to big banks to manage the student loan system. We said, we don't need the banks; let's give the money directly to students, we can help more students. We can help more students that way. So we expanded the grants that help millions of students from low-income backgrounds pay for college. We're offering millions of people the chance to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their incomes once they graduate.

Today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before. That's a great thing. [*Applause*] That is a great thing. But we still need to do more to help rein in the rising cost of tuition. We need to do more to help Americans who feel trapped by student loan debt, because no striving, hard-working, ambitious, young American should ever be denied a college education just because they can't afford it. Nobody.

Unfortunately, there are still a lot of young people all across the country who say the cost of college is holding them back. Some of you may have sat around the kitchen table with your parents wondering about whether you'll be able to afford it. So FAFSA is by far the easiest way to answer that question. And I know the Barracudas know all about FAFSA. Last year, you had the second highest completion rate of any large high school in the State. You should be proud of that. Your teachers and parents should be proud of that.

But last year, almost half of high school graduates in Florida didn't fill out the FAFSA form.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That ain't right. [*Laughter*] Not only is it not right, but it also ain't right. [*Laughter*] And as a result, they lost out on over $100 million in Pell grants. Think about that: A hundred million dollars that could have helped Florida students help pay for college was just left on the table. That's just in Florida. Nationwide, over 1 million high school students did not fill out the FAFSA form. That happens every year.

So my challenge today to every high school student in America: Fill out the form. Even if you think you might not qualify for financial aid, fill out the form. You might qualify.

And we're making it easier than ever. We put the FAFSA form online. We made it shorter. It takes about half an hour to fill out. And it could change the rest of your life. We've updated it to save your parents a lot of hassle as well. And today I'm announcing another improvement.

Today I'm directing the Department of Education to tell every Governor that, starting today, they can, if they choose, confidentially let high school administrators know which students have filled out the FAFSA form and which haven't. So that way, if Principal Leal wants to check in with the seniors——

Audience members. Woo.

The President. I know, everybody is, like, whoa. [*Laughter*] I know she's already on top of stuff, but this way, she can—she could check, and seniors who had not filled it out, she could then help them answer the questions and figure out what's holding her back—what's holding them back.

Anybody will be able to go online and find out the number of students who have filled out the form at each high school, so we can track it. So if you want to have a friendly competition with Palmetto High or Miami Killian to see who can get a higher completion rate on your FAFSA, you can do that. You achieved the second highest rate in the State, but I mean, if you want to settle for number two, that's okay; you might be able to get number one.

Audience members. No!

The President. Huh? I'm just saying, you could go for number one. [*Applause*]

So these are things I can do on my own, but I'm here to also tell you I need—I could use some help from folks in Washington. There are some things I don't need Congress's permission for, and in this year of action, whenever I see a way to act to help expand opportunity for young people, I'm just going to go ahead and take it. [*Applause*] I'm just going to go ahead and do it.

So earlier this year, Michelle and I hosted a College Opportunity Summit, where over 150 colleges and universities and nonprofits made

commitments to help more low-income students get to college and graduate from college. But I'm also willing to work with anybody in Congress—Democrat, Republican, doesn't matter—to make sure young people like you have a shot to success.

So a few days ago, I sent my budget to Congress. And budgets are pretty boring, but the stuff inside the budgets are pretty important. And my budget focuses on things like preschool for all; like redesigning high schools so students like you can learn real-world skills that businesses want; like preparing more young people for careers in some of the fields of the future, in science and technology and engineering and math, to discover new planets and invent robots and cure diseases—all the cool stuff that we adults haven't figured out yet. [*Laughter*]

These are not just the right investments for our schools, they're the right priorities for our country. You are our priority. We've got to make sure we have budgets that reflect that you are the most important thing to this country's success. If you don't succeed, we don't succeed.

We've got to make sure all of you are prepared for the new century, and we've got to keep growing our economy in other ways: attracting new high-tech jobs, reforming our immigration system, something Congressman Garcia is fighting for. And the rest of Congress needs to stop doing nothing, do right by America's students, America's teachers, America's workers. Let's get to work. Let's get busy. We've got work to do. All of us have work to do: teachers, school counselors, principals, superintendents, parents, grandparents.

We all have work to do, because we want to see you succeed, because we're counting on you, Barracudas. All of you. And if you keep reaching for success—and I know you will, just based on the small sampling we saw of students here—if you keep working as hard as you can and learning as much as you can, and if you've got big ambitions and big dreams, if you don't let anybody tell you something is out of your reach, if you are convinced that you can do something and apply effort and energy and determination and persistence to that vision, then not only will you be great, but this country will be great. Our schools will be great.

I want us to have the best educated workforce in America. And I want it to be the most diverse workforce in the world. That's what I'm fighting for. That's what your superintendent and your principal are fighting for, and I hope that's what you fight for yourselves. Because when I meet the students here at Coral Reef, I am optimistic about the future. Michelle and I walked out of that classroom, and we said, you know what, we're going to be in good hands, we're going to do okay, because these young people are coming, and nobody is going to stop them.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng and mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Statement on the 49th Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights March From Selma to Montgomery, Alabama
March 7, 2014

Forty-nine years ago, a determined group of Americans marched into history, facing down grave danger in the name of justice and equality, walking to protest the continued discrimination and violence against African Americans. On a day that became known as Bloody Sunday, these brave men and women met billy clubs and tear gas with courage and resolution. Their actions helped set an example for a generation to stand up for the fundamental freedoms due to all people. We recognize those who marched that day and the millions more who have done their part throughout our Nation's history to bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice.

The President's Weekly Address
March 8, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, I traveled to New England, where I was joined by four Governors who are working to raise the minimum wage in each of their States. And they've also joined me in calling on Congress to raise the minimum wage from $7.25 an hour to $10.10 an hour. Because it would give nearly 800,000 Americans in their States a raise and lift wages for about 28 million people across the country.

So these Governors aren't waiting for Congress to make up its mind. And in my State of the Union Address, I asked America's business leaders to go ahead and do what they could to raise their employees' wages too. And increasingly, it's not just large companies like Costco or the Gap that choose to pay their employees higher starting wages.

It's smaller businesses like Jaxson's, a family-owned ice cream parlor in South Florida. They answered the call and raised their wages so that more than 70 employees would earn at least $10.10 an hour, without cutting back on hiring.

And 2 weeks ago, an Atlanta small-business owner named Darien Southerland wrote me to share a lesson his grandmother taught him: that if you treat your employees right, they'll treat you right. And Vice President Biden paid him a visit this week.

I agree with these business owners, which is why I issued an Executive order requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. It's good for our bottom line. And working Americans have struggled through stagnant wages for far too long.

A clear majority of Americans support raising the minimum wage because we believe that nobody who works full time should have to live in poverty. About half of all Republicans support raising the minimum wage too. It's just too bad they don't serve in Congress. Because the Republicans who do serve in Congress don't want to vote on the minimum wage at all. Some even want to get rid of it completely. Seriously.

That's why what business leaders and everyday Americans are doing to raise wages is so important. Because change doesn't come from Washington, change comes to Washington. I've always believed that, and it's true in this case too. Outside Washington, Americans are ready to put aside old political arguments and move this country forward. The American people are way ahead of Congress on this issue, and we've just got to let Congress know that. It's time for "10–10." It's time to give America a raise. And it's time to restore opportunity for all.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:44 p.m. on March 6 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on March 8. In the address, the President referred to Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut; Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts; Gov. Peter E. Shumlin of Vermont; Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee of Rhode Island; and Darien J. Southerland, chief strategy officer, BG Ad Group. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on March 8.

Remarks Honoring 2012–2013 NCAA Championship Teams
March 10, 2014

Hello, everybody. Hello! Hey! Everybody, have a seat. Look it: She's taking selfies. [*Laughter*] Sit down. [*Laughter*] Sit down. I caught you. [*Laughter*] Well, I've already said hi to everybody, so I'm going to keep my remarks pretty short.

Welcome to the White House. It is nice to be outside for a change, and spring break is un-

der way for a lot of schools, and so we thought this was the perfect time to invite a bunch of college kids over to wreak havoc on the White House. What could go wrong?

This is an incredible group. I had a chance to meet many of you earlier. We've got golfers. We've got runners. We've got soccer players. We've got everything in between. We've even got some volleyball-playing Anteaters. [*Laughter*] And the West Virginia rifle team is here, although the Secret Service is not sure whether we checked them before they came in. We've got the Minnesota women's hockey team, which includes a few players who competed for Team U.S.A. in Sochi. Yay!

We've got three schools that sent a pair of teams here today. The Tar Heels, we've got women's lacrosse and women's soccer. For Princeton, we've got fencing and field hockey. For USC, we have men's and women's water polo.

We've got a lot of champs here today. I want to make sure everybody gets their due. So on the women's side, let's give it up for the Kansas track and field team, the Oklahoma softball team, the Stanford tennis team. And on the men's side, we've got the Alabama golf team, the UC–Irvine volleyball team, Colorado cross country, Duke lacrosse, Indiana soccer, Oklahoma cross country, Virginia tennis, and the Yale hockey squad.

Now, no matter what sport you play and no matter where you come from, for the rest of your lives, every single one of you is going to be able to call yourselves a national champion. And you know that a title like that means not just performing your best when the spotlight is on and the game is underway, but also pushing yourself even harder when nobody is watching: dragging yourself out of bed for early morning weight-lifting sessions and gutting out the preseason two-a-days. It means cracking the books, I hope, on those late-night bus rides home and making sure to leave time to study when everybody else is out having fun. And it means that after practice, when other folks might turn off the lights and head home, you ask the janitor to keep the lights on so you can run another drill—or two or three.

And that's the championship spirit that we're celebrating today, not just the trophies in the display case back home, but the drive and the toughness and the teamwork that put them there.

And at a time when legendary conferences are being reshuffled and too many schools have been forced to cut sports, athletes like all of you remind us that at their core, college athletics are supposed to be about a lot more than just network ratings. They're about the shy freshman who develops into a team captain, the underdog who learns how to play in the spotlight and learns how to slay the giant, the role player who fights through an injury to play on Senior Day. It's about playing a game that you love, even if you're not on a full scholarship or even if the only folks cheering you on are your mom and dad. And at their best, college sports teach us about giving back to our communities.

So athletes from these teams have spent time visiting local children's hospitals, volunteering with the Special Olympics, and speaking to young people about bullying. You've helped raise awareness for efforts like Habitat for Humanity and Read Across America and LGBT rights.

And that's the kind of ethic that shows, this is not just about winning, it's about learning how to lift other people up. That's what makes a true champion. And that's what will serve you well no matter what path you choose in the years ahead, whether as a coach or an athlete or a doctor or a teacher or an entrepreneur. Our country needs young people like you to keep giving your best and to keep bringing out the best in those around you. That's how we keep making progress and moving forward. And that's why we're all looking forward to seeing what all of you accomplish in the years ahead.

And I'm particularly proud of two things. One, it's traditional to bring football and basketball teams here. I think that for all these outstanding athletes and sports, it's important to acknowledge that your investment and time and effort and dedication is just as significant. And you may not always be on television all the

time, but what you guys do is remarkable, and you are truly great athletes.

The second thing is, I can't tell you how proud I am of the young women here. There was a time when college women's athletics was relegated to second status. And all of you here are showing the incredible strides that we've made over the last couple of decades. And it means that Malia and Sasha and my nieces, they all know how important athletics is in their lives. And you guys have really paved the way. So we're really proud of you for that.

I want to congratulate all of you on your championship season. I hope that you guys enjoyed your time at the White House. I want to wish all of you the best of luck in the time ahead. For those of you who are returning, coming back, good luck next season. And for those of you who are graduating, Godspeed.

All right? I hope you guys had a good time. Take care of yourselves. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Megan Bozek, Gisèle M. "Gigi" Marvin, Anne Schleper, and Lee Stecklein, defensemen, and Amanda Kessel, forward, 2014 U.S. women's hockey team. He also referred to his nieces Leslie Robinson and Savita and Suhaila Ng.

Remarks on Signing a Proclamation Regarding Boundary Enlargement of the California Coastal National Monument
March 11, 2014

The President. As some of you know, in my State of the Union Address, I talked about taking any actions that I could to ensure that this incredible gift of American lands, the natural bounty that has been passed on to us from previous generations, is preserved for future generations. And I pledged to act wherever I could to make sure that our children, our grandchildren are going to be able to look upon this land of ours with the same wonder as we have.

Today I'm taking the important step by designating the Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands as a national monument. I want to thank the lawmakers who supported this proclamation, including Representatives Jared Huffman and Mike Thompson, as well as Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

And I also want to recognize Larry Stornetta, who is here—there is Larry right here—whose family helped care for this land and sold part of the ranch so the public could access it.

We are talking about over 1,600 acres of incredible coastline in California that reflects the incredible diversity of flora and fauna. It is a place where scientists do research, where people who just want to experience the great outdoors can take advantage of it. It is a huge economic boost for the region. California tourism obviously is important, and the California coastline, I think, is as big of an attraction as there is.

And so for us to make sure that this is going to be properly preserved, that it is going to be cherished, that the Federal protections will be available, I think is going to make all the difference.

And one of the great things about the way we've done our national monument designations is that we've made sure that all the stakeholders are involved throughout this process. We talk to local communities. We talk to local business interests. We talk to Native American tribes. We make sure that anybody who may have some impact, their voice is heard. And unanimously, in this part of the country, people believe that this is the right thing to do, and I certainly do.

So it's a great pleasure for me to be able to sign this designation. I want to congratulate all the people behind me who worked so hard to make this happen. And I told them that I'm always looking for an excuse to get outside. [*Laughter*] So I hope I get a chance to roam around this amazing landmark sometime in the future. All right?

And with that, I'm going to sign this proclamation.

[*At this point, the President signed the proclamation.*]

There's a special trick to this—[*laughter*].

Audience member. Yes. We wondered how it worked.

The President. There we go. Congratulations. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:46 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lawrence Stornetta, owner, Stornetta Brothers Farms. Proclamation 9089 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in New York City

March 11, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Well, let me start by just thanking Tony and Amie and the James family for hosting this wonderful dinner. And they have been great friends. I will say that the last time I saw them they were dancing well past their curfew. [*Laughter*] But I probably shouldn't say anything about that in front of the press. [*Laughter*]

I also want to acknowledge the new mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio, and his wonderful partner and powerhouse, Chirlane, who are here today. And we are so looking forward to the great work that they're going to do here in New York, and obviously, we want to be a partner with this city. As many of you know, I've got a deep, abiding love for New York. Having gone to school here and spent a bunch of time here and seeing all the energy and possibilities, I'm very, very excited and very invested in your success.

I also want to acknowledge one of the finest public servants in the country, who has a very thankless job, and that is, to try to make sure that we have a Democratic Senate, which means he has to travel constantly away from his gorgeous daughters and his wonderful wife: Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado. So I just wanted to acknowledge him as well.

Tony pretty much summed it up, so I don't have to really say much. [*Laughter*] I'll just put a little flesh on the bones. Over the last 5 years, our economy has recovered faster and stronger from the worst financial crisis and economic crisis since the Great Depression, better than any other developed country on Earth. And you can take a look at the charts and see that because of the actions we took—because of the Recovery Act, because of the Fed—because of swift, coordinated action, we have bounced back.

We've created 8.5 million new jobs over the last 5 years. We've had 4 years of consecutive job growth as well as economic growth. We have seen an auto industry that was basically flatlining rebound in ways that very few people would have anticipated. The stock market is close to the highest that it's ever been; close to $10 trillion of wealth has been recovered that was lost.

On the energy front, we've produced more energy than we ever have before. We're importing less. We have doubled clean energy production. And we've done all this while reducing carbon emissions that cause climate change faster than other developed countries, including Europe, including the entire continent of Europe.

Not only have we already provided health care for millions of people who didn't have it before—the latest report is we've got well over 4 million people who've already signed up through the exchanges; we've got 3 million young people who are staying on their parents' health care that didn't have that opportunity before; we've got millions more who are signed up for Medicaid, including here in New York City—but we've done all this while seeing the increase in health care costs go up at the slowest rate in 50 years.

On the education front, we've seen unprecedented movements for reform all across the country. The dropout rate has been reduced. The Latino dropout rate has been cut in half. And so as—and then we've done all this while also reducing the deficit in half, so that we are on a glide path for a deficit-to-GDP ratio that is sustainable.

That's not bad. And yet if you talk to folks around the country, there is still enormous anxiety, and people feel uncertain about their futures and, more importantly, their children's futures. And why is that? Because although we have rebounded and we are growing and there are all kinds of indicators that tell us that the 21st century can be the American century just like the 20th was, that growth has been uneven, and the beneficiaries of that growth have been uneven.

Now, obviously, anybody who has got a 401(k) has benefited from the stock market recovering, but a lot of people don't have 401(k)s, don't have any kind of retirement accounts at all. Corporate profits have done very well, but wages and incomes have been more or less flat. Those are trends that were true even before the financial crisis, and they've continued and in some ways accelerated.

Some of this has to do with globalization. A lot of it has to do with technology. But it is within our power to make sure that this economy not only grows, but it grows in a broad-based way so that every child in this country has opportunity and so that what has always been the engine of American prosperity—that sense that brings people from all across the world to come here, that sense that if you work hard, you can make it here in America—that dream can be sustained. But we're going to have to take some concrete steps to do it.

And a lot of this stuff in a normal political environment would be noncontroversial. We've got $2 trillion worth of deferred maintenance, and I suspect the mayor is rapidly figuring out that there are going to be a lot more potholes this year because of the winter. We could rebuild our roads, our bridges. The next generation of air traffic control could reduce travel times drastically for flyers all across the country and reduce fuel and carbon emissions by about 30 percent and create a whole bunch of jobs for engineers, computer programmers, and construction workers. Why aren't we doing it? Interest rates are still low. People want to work. Contractors—I can't speak about the contractors who worked on this house because that's always challenging, but—[*laughter*]—but contractors, they're coming in on time and under budget. They're dying for work. Why aren't we rebuilding America right now?

We know that the country that has the highest skilled workers are going to be able to attract more business. The average age of a tradesman in Wisconsin is 59 years old. Manufacturers, because of lower energy prices, are interested in coming here. What is holding them back is, they're not sure that they can find enough skilled workers. Why aren't we training them? We know that makes sense.

In early childhood education, you invest a dollar, you get 7 bucks back, reduce crime rates, reduce teen pregnancy, reduce dropout rates. We know it works. Why aren't we doing it? We're not taking these basic steps. Immigration reform, everybody says the system is broken. Republicans, John Boehner acknowledges we need to change it. Why is it that we're not going ahead and doing it? The bill already passed out of the Senate on a bipartisan vote. What's holding us back?

What's holding us back is politics. What's holding us back is an atmosphere in Washington that puts a premium on saying no, puts a premium on an eye towards the next election instead of delivering on behalf of the American people.

Now, I said in my State of the Union I am prepared to work with anybody, and I've shown myself willing to work with anybody in order to advance America's agenda. And I've also said I can't wait, so if Congress isn't going to act, I'll do what I can to act. I will work with cities that are interested in doing early childhood education. I will work with the private sector to see if we can come up with creative ways to finance some of our infrastructure needs. We'll go out there and do a whole bunch of stuff administratively to try to make

Government work better, more efficiently, deliver better services and advance a broad-based growth agenda. But, man, it would be a lot easier if I had a Congress that was serious about America's future.

There are some things I can't do by myself. Congress has the power of the purse. We cannot deal with infrastructure on the levels we need to without Congress. I can do some things on immigration, but I cannot make sure that we have an immigration system that potentially could grow our economy by an extra trillion dollars without Congress's help.

And so that's why all of you are here today. My argument is very simple. Tony is right: We have all the cards we need for America to compete. And when you travel outside this country, what's always remarkable to me is the degree to which people view us still with envy with respect to our economy. They marvel at our resiliency. They marvel at our dynamism. They marvel at low natural gas prices. They really marvel at that. They marvel at the degree to which we can attract talent from around the world. They marvel at our university system, which is unmatched. But to realize all our potential that's sitting there right now we've got to have a Washington that functions better.

And the fact of the matter is that Democrats are not without our flaws. We have our blind spots, and we have our dogmas, and we've got our crazy folks. [*Laughter*] But as a whole, this is a party that is serious about making sure that America is growing and offering opportunity to everybody. And the story many of you here in this room have lived, the success that you've lived out, what we're about is making sure a whole bunch of kids behind us can live out that same success. And if I have just a smidgeon of a cooperative Congress, think what we can do these next 2½ years.

So I need your help. Michael Bennet needs your help. And I hope you will all step up because, although I'm very optimistic about our long-term trends, the notion that we would waste 2 years in further inaction rather than move boldly on a path that I think all of us in this room agree on, we don't have time to waste. I don't have time to waste. The clock is ticking. There's less than 2 years left—less than 3 years left. I want to squeeze every last little bit of work that I can during the remainder of my term so that, looking back, I'm going to be able to say that we left everything on the field and every single person I could help in this office—which is such an incredible privilege—I helped.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. at the residence of Hamilton E. "Tony" and Amie James. In his remarks, he referred to Chirlane McCray, wife of Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City; and Susan D. Bennet, wife of Sen. Michael F. Bennet, and their daughters Caroline, Halina, and Anne.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk of Ukraine and an Exchange With Reporters
March 12, 2014

President Obama. It is a pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Yatsenyuk to the Oval Office, to the White House.

I think all of us have seen the courage of the Ukrainian people in standing up on behalf of democracy and on the desire that I believe is universal for people to be able to determine their own destiny. And we saw in the Maidan how ordinary people from all parts of the country had said that we want a change. And the Prime Minister was part of that process, showed tremendous courage, and upheld the principles of nonviolence throughout the course of events over the last several months.

Obviously, the Prime Minister comes here during a very difficult time for his country. In the aftermath of President Yanukovych leaving the country, the Parliament, the Rada, acted in a responsible fashion to fill the void, created a inclusive process in which all parties had input,

including the party of former President Yanukovych. They have set forward a process to stabilize the country, take a very deliberate step to assure economic stability and negotiate with the International Monetary Fund, and to schedule early elections so that the Ukrainian people, in fact, can choose their direction for the future. And the Prime Minister has managed that process with great skill and great restraint, and we're very much appreciative of the work that he has done.

The most pressing challenge that Ukraine faces at the moment, however, is the threat to its territorial integrity and its sovereignty. We have been very clear that we consider the Russian incursion into Crimea outside of its bases to be a violation of international law, of international agreements of which Russia is a signatory, and a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. And we have been very firm in saying that we will stand with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in ensuring that that territorial integrity and sovereignty is maintained.

I think we all recognize that there are historic ties between Russia and Ukraine, and I think the Prime Minister would be the first one to acknowledge that. And I think the Prime Minister and the current Government in Kiev has recognized and has communicated directly to the Russian Federation their desire to try to manage through this process diplomatically. But what the Prime Minister, I think, has rightly insisted on is, is that they cannot have a country outside of Ukraine dictate to them how they should arrange their affairs and that there is a constitutional process in place and a set of elections that they can move forward on that, in fact, could lead to different arrangements over time with the Crimean region, but that is not something that can be done with the barrel of a gun pointed at you.

And so Secretary Kerry is in communications with the Russian Government and has offered to try to explore with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Lavrov, a diplomatic solution to this crisis. We are in close communication with the Ukrainian Government in terms of how we might proceed going forward. But we will continue to say to the Russian Government that if it continues on the path that it is on, then not only us, but the international community—the European Union and others—will be forced to apply a cost to Russia's violations of international law and its encroachments on Ukraine.

There's another path available, and we hope that President Putin is willing to seize that path. But if he does not, I'm very confident that the international community will stand strongly behind the Ukrainian Government in preserving its unity and its territorial integrity.

Let me just make two final points. Obviously, because of the political turmoil, the economic situation in Ukraine has become more challenging, not less. And that's why I'm very proud that not only as critical members of the International Monetary Fund, the IMF, we are working with the Prime Minister and his team in a package that can help to institute necessary reforms inside of the Ukraine, but also help to stabilize the situation so that people feel confident that in their daily lives, they can meet their basic necessities.

We're also asking Congress to act promptly to deliver on an aid package, including a $1 billion loan guarantee that can help smooth the path for reform inside of Ukraine and give the Prime Minister and his government the capacity to do what they need to do as they are also organizing an election process. So I would just ask both Democrats and Republicans, who I know are unified in their support of Ukraine, to move quickly to give us the support that we need so that we can give the Ukrainian people the support that they need.

And then, finally, Mr. Prime Minister, I would ask that you deliver a message on behalf of the American people to all the Ukrainian people, and that is that we admire their courage, we appreciate their aspirations. The interests of the United States are solely in making sure that the people of Ukraine are able to determine their own destiny. That is something that here in the United States we believe in deeply. I know it's something that you believe in deeply as well. And you can rest assured that

you will have our strong support as you move forward during these difficult times.

So thank you.

Prime Minister Yatsenyuk. Thank you, Mr. President. And we highly appreciate the support that you have given to the Ukrainian people. And my country feels that the United States stands by the Ukrainian people.

Mr. President, it's all about the freedom. We fight for our freedom. We fight for our independence. We fight for our sovereignty. And we will never surrender.

My country has faced a number of challenges. The military one is a key challenge today, and we urge Russia to stick to its international obligations, to pull back its military into barracks, and to start the dialogue with no guns, with no military, with no tanks, but with the diplomacy and political tools.

On behalf of my government, I would like to reiterate that we are absolutely ready and open for talks with the Russian Federation. We adhere to all international obligations. And we as the state of Ukraine, will fulfill all bilateral and multilateral international treaties.

On the economic side, Mr. President, we highly appreciate the support of the United States and the decision to guarantee $1 billion loans for the Ukrainian economy. You know that we resumed talks with the IMF. We do understand that these are tough reforms, but these reforms are needed for the Ukrainian state. And we are back on track in terms of delivering real reforms in my country.

As I already informed you, probably in the nearest future—next week or in 10 days—Ukraine is to sign a political part of association agreement with the European Union, and we want to be very clear that Ukraine is and will be a part of the Western world. And our Russian partners have to realize that we are ready to make a new type or to craft a new type of our relationship where Ukraine is a part of the European Union, but Ukraine is a good friend and partner of Russia.

So much will depend on whether Russia wants to have these talks and whether Russia wants to have Ukraine as a partner or as a subordinate. As I already indicated, we will never surrender, and we will do everything in order to preserve peace, stability, and independence of my country. And we appreciate your personal support, support of your Government, support of the American people to the Ukrainian people.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Obama. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much.

Ukraine/Russia's Intervention in Ukraine

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Obama. Julie [Julie Pace, Associated Press], we completely reject a referendum patched together in a few weeks with Russian military personnel basically taking over Crimea. We reject its legitimacy. It is contrary to international law. It is contrary to the Ukrainian Constitution.

I know that we've heard from the Russian Federation this notion that these kinds of decisions are often made in other places, and they've even analogized it to Scotland or other situations of that sort. In each of those cases that they've cited, decisions were made by a national government through a long, lengthy, deliberative process. It's not something that happens in a few days, and it's not something that happens with an outside army essentially taking over the region.

As you just heard the Prime Minister indicate, the people of Ukraine recognize historic ties with the people of Russia. The Prime Minister you just heard say, repeat what he's said often, which is, they're prepared to respect all international treaties and obligations that they are signatories to, including Russian basing rights in Crimea. The issue now is whether or not Russia is able to militarily dominate a region of somebody else's country, engineer a slapdash referendum, and ignore not only the Ukrainian Constitution, but a Ukrainian Government that includes parties that are historically in opposition with each other, including, by the way, the party of the previous President.

So we will not recognize, certainly, any referendum that goes forward. My hope is, is that as a consequence of diplomatic efforts over the

next several days, that there will be a rethinking of the process that's been put forward.

We have already put in place the architecture for us to apply financial and economic consequences to actions that are taken. But our strong preference is to resolve this diplomatically. And as you heard the Prime Minister say, this idea that somehow the Ukrainian people are forced to choose between good relations with the West or good relations with Russia, economic ties with the West or economic ties with Russia, is the kind of zero-sum formulation that in the 21st century, with a highly integrated, global economy, doesn't make any sense and is not in the interests of the Ukrainian people.

I actually think, in the end, it's not in the interests of Russia either. Russia should be thinking about how can it work with Ukraine to further strengthen its economic ties and trade and exchanges with Europe. That will make Russia stronger, not weaker. But obviously, Mr. Putin has some different ideas at this point.

We do not know yet what our diplomatic efforts will yield, but we'll keep on pressing. In the meantime, the main message I want to send is that we are highly supportive of a government in Kiev that is taking on some very tough decisions, is committed to law and order, inclusivity, committed to the rights of all Ukrainian people, and is committed to fair and free elections that should settle, once and for, all any questions that there may be about what's transpired since former President Yanukovych left the country.

And the most important thing to remember is, this is up to the Ukrainian people. It's not up to the United States. It's not up to Russia. It's up to the Ukrainian people to make a decision about how they want to live their lives. That's what all of us should support. And certainly that's the reason why I'm so pleased to have the Prime Minister here today. All right?

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Viktor Yanukovych of Ukraine, who left the country after being removed from office in February by a vote in Parliament; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

Joint Statement by Group of Seven Leaders on the Situation in Ukraine
March 12, 2014

We, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, call on the Russian Federation to cease all efforts to change the status of Crimea contrary to Ukrainian law and in violation of international law. We call on the Russian Federation to immediately halt actions supporting a referendum on the territory of Crimea regarding its status, in direct violation of the Constitution of Ukraine.

Any such referendum would have no legal effect. Given the lack of adequate preparation and the intimidating presence of Russian troops, it would also be a deeply flawed process which would have no moral force. For all these reasons, we would not recognize the outcome.

Russian annexation of Crimea would be a clear violation of the United Nations Charter; Russia's commitments under the Helsinki Final Act; its obligations to Ukraine under its 1997 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership; the Russia-Ukraine 1997 basing agreement; and its commitments in the Budapest Memorandum of 1994. In addition to its impact on the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea could have grave implications for the legal order that protects the unity and sovereignty of all states. Should the Russian Federation take such a step, we will take further action, individually and collectively.

We call on the Russian Federation to de-escalate the conflict in Crimea and other parts of Ukraine immediately, withdraw its forces

back to their pre-crisis numbers and garrisons, begin direct discussions with the Government of Ukraine, and avail itself of international mediation and observation offers to address any legitimate concerns it may have. We, the leaders of the G–7, urge Russia to join us in working together through diplomatic processes to resolve the current crisis and support progress for a sovereign independent, inclusive and united Ukraine. We also remind the Russian Federation of our decision to suspend participation in any activities related to preparation of a G–8 Sochi meeting until it changes course and the environment comes back to where the G–8 is able to have a meaningful discussion.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks to Women Members of Congress and an Exchange With Reporters
March 12, 2014

The President. Well, it's an honor for me to welcome these outstanding women Members of Congress.

And I think that over the last several weeks and months, what the American people have seen is my single most important priority domestically is to make sure that everybody in this country has opportunity, that if you're willing to work hard and take responsibility, you can make it. At a time when the economy is growing, at a time when corporate profits are high and the stock market is doing well, we want to make sure that everybody is benefiting from that growth, because what we know is, when everybody has opportunity, when everybody is on the field, America's economy grows faster, the middle class expands, and that in turn fosters more growth.

Now, recently, my economic team did a report that delivered some good news. It turns out that women are succeeding in colleges and graduate education like never before. They are more represented in professions and occupations that previously they were restricted from participating in. And what we've seen in our own families and our own lives is that there are doors that have been opened to women that previously were closed.

And yet, despite that progress, despite that good news, what we also know is, women are still making 77 cents on the dollar, including when they enter into these high-paying professions, they're making less money. We know that women continue to be disproportionately represented in low-wage professions, which means that something like an increase in the Federal minimum wage is going to have a disproportionate impact on them. And women are still the ones that are carrying the greatest burden when it comes to trying to balance family and work. Because of inadequate childcare or the inability to get paid leave for a sick child or an ailing parent, they end up suffering the burdens, and by the way, that means families are suffering the burden, because, increasingly, women are a critical breadwinner for families all across the country.

So it is with that in mind that we've been working on—many of the women who are here today and other Members of Congress—on organizing a White House Summit on Working Families that is going to take place this summer on June 23. And this will give us an opportunity to build on the work that we're doing here in the White House around issues like minimum wage, around issues like family leave, around issues like equal pay. But we're also going to be able to invite other stakeholders, folks outside of Washington, people who are able to tell their story, talk about their experiences—Governors and mayors, business leaders—all of whom can work together with us to make sure that we're advancing not just the interests of women, but the interests of families and the interests of the middle class and people who are trying to get into the middle class.

So I'm tremendously grateful for the leadership that the Members of Congress have already shown on this issue. I am proud that we have taken some initiatives on our own, because sometimes, Congress is a little stubborn

about these issues, at least some of our good friends on the other side of the aisle. But we're going to keep on pressing. Because if we work together, this is a great opportunity for the United States to take some leaps forward.

One of our greatest strengths, by the way, is that, compared to some other countries, our participation of women in the workforce gives us a potential economic advantage. But we've got to make sure that we're actually fulfilling that promise, and that's what this conference will be all about, this summit will be all about during this summer.

So with that, I'd like to have the two women seated next to me just make brief remarks. First of all, our outstanding leader of the Democrats in the House and first female Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi. And she will be followed by somebody who has been doing a lot of work on budget stuff, but understands also family budgets and why this is so important, Senator Patty Murray.

So, Nancy.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for bringing us together. Thank you for your leadership on the White House Summit for Working Families. As you know, the House and Senate women have been working on our agendas in this regard, reflecting the values and the approaches you have put forth. Also thank you for mentioning in the State of the Union, when women succeed, America succeeds. Our—it's not a slogan, it's a statement of fact. [*Laughter*] That's why when you talk you about paycheck fairness or you talk about paid sick leave and the work-family balance and you talk about early childhood learning, you have initiatives in all of these areas. And as you said at the end, it's really important—not just for women and families and men, but for our economy—that women succeed.

So thank you for inviting us to talk about how we go forward with the summit, and thank you for being out there on this, and thank Michelle too. [*Laughter*]

The President. She's on me about this all the time. [*Laughter*]

Leader Pelosi. Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Patricia L. Murray. As she should be. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, thank you so much. We are delighted to join you at this really important discussion along with Leader Pelosi and all of our colleagues to talk about one of the most important issues facing our economy today, and that is the ability for women in America to have the kinds of opportunities to participate and really help grow our economy.

You mentioned that women earn 77 cents on the dollar. If you put that another way, women work for free until April Fool's Day, and then we get our first check. And that is an economic issue to women in America and one that we're going to be addressing in the Senate very soon along with raising the minimum wage, which affects two-thirds of the people on minimum wage, as working women.

The other issues that you're talking about are so important to families, whether it's childcare or family leave, the policies that affect our families, affect the ability of a woman to do the best job. You as a woman do a good job at work if you know your kids are okay; we were just talking about that. And we want to make sure that we address that broad range of issues to help make sure that we help this economy grow and prosper and really appreciate your leadership.

The President. Fantastic. Thank you very much, everybody.

Senate Intelligence Committee Report on Central Intelligence Agency Interrogation Techniques

Q. Are you concerned about Senator—the CIA was spying on the Senate?

The President. I'll just say a quick statement on the CIA issue. The first day I came into office, I ended the practices that are subject to the investigation by the Senate Committee and have been very clear that I believe they were contrary to our values as a country.

Since that time, we have worked with the Senate Committee so that the report that they are putting forward is well informed, and what I've said is that I am absolutely committed to declassifying that report as soon as the report is completed. In fact, I would urge them to go ahead and

complete the report, send it to us. We will declassify those findings so that the American people can understand what happened in the past, and that can help guide us as we move forward.

With respect to the issues that are going back and forth between the Senate Committee and the CIA, John Brennan has referred them to the appropriate authorities, and they are looking into it. And that's not something that is an appropriate role for me and the White House to wade into at this point.

But the one thing that I want to emphasize is the substantive issue, which is how do we operate even when we're threatened, even when we've gone through extraordinary trauma, has to be consistent with rule of law and our values. And I acted on that on the first day, and that hasn't changed.

All right? Thanks very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:17 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran
March 12, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared on March 15, 1995, is to continue in effect beyond March 15, 2014.

The crisis between the United States and Iran resulting from the actions and policies of the Government of Iran has not been resolved. The Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) between the P5+1 and Iran went into effect on January 20, 2014, for a period of 6 months. This marks the first time in a decade that Iran has agreed to and taken specific actions to halt its nuclear program and to roll it back in key respects. In return for Iran's actions on its nuclear program, the P5+1, in coordination with the European Union, are taking actions to implement the limited, temporary, and reversible sanctions relief outlined in the JPOA.

Nevertheless, certain actions and policies of the Government of Iran are contrary to the interests of the United States in the region and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to Iran and to maintain in force comprehensive sanctions against Iran to deal with this threat.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
March 12, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum on Updating and Modernizing Overtime Regulations
March 13, 2014

The President. Thank you so much. Please. Thank you, guys. Please have a seat. Thank you very much.

Well, welcome to the White House. Before I get started, I just want to acknowledge somebody who is working so hard on behalf of

America's workers each and every day, our outstanding Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez. So give him a big round of applause. There you go. Tom must have brought some of his family with him. [*Laughter*]

The—we've got a lot of honored guests here. We've got middle class workers who rely on overtime pay. We've got business owners who believe in treating their employees right, both because it's the right thing to do, but also because it's good business. And thanks to the hard work and resilience of Americans like the ones who are here today, our economy has been growing for a number of years now.

Our businesses have created more than 8½ million new jobs over the last 4 years. The unemployment rate is at the lowest it's been in over 5 years. But in many ways, the trends that have really battered middle class families for decades have gotten worse, not better. Those at the top are doing better than ever, but for the average family, wages have barely budged. And too many Americans are working harder and harder just to get by.

So we've got to reverse those trends. We've got to build an economy that works for everybody, not just for a few. And we've got to restore the basic notion of opportunity that is at the heart of the American experience: opportunity for everyone; the belief that here in America, it doesn't matter where you started, if you are willing to work hard and act responsibly, you've got a chance to get ahead.

So at my State of the Union at the beginning of the year, I laid out an opportunity agenda to give more Americans a chance to succeed. It's got four parts. Number one, making sure we're creating more good jobs that pay good wages. Number two, making sure that we're training more Americans with the skills that are needed to fill those jobs. Number three, making sure every child in America gets a world-class education. And number four, which is what I'm going to be focusing on today, making sure that our economy rewards the hard work of every American.

Now, making work pay means making sure women earn equal pay for equal work. It means giving women the chance to have a baby without sacrificing jobs or a day off to care for a sick child or parent without worrying about making ends meet. It means making sure every American has access to quality, affordable health care that's there when you need it. So if there's somebody out there that you know that doesn't have health insurance, make sure they go on healthcare.gov—[*laughter*]—before March 31. That's a priority. And it means wages and paychecks that help to support a family.

Profitable corporations like Costco see paying higher wages as way to reduce turnover and boost productivity. And I've asked business owners to do what they can to give their employee a raise. As some of you saw, I was at the Gap yesterday in—or the day before yesterday in Manhattan, and fortunately, Malia and Sasha liked the sweaters I bought them. [*Laughter*] But part of what I wanted to highlight was the fact that, on its own, the Gap decided to give a raise to 64,000 employees across the country.

I've now called on Congress to give America a raise by raising the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. And in this year of action, while Congress decides what it's going to do, whether it's going to do anything about this issue—and I hope that it does, and I know Democrats are pushing hard to get minimum wage legislation passed—I'm going to do what I can on my own to raise wages for more hard-working Americans. So a few weeks ago, I signed an Executive order requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. Today I'm going to use my pen to give more Americans the chance to earn the overtime pay that they deserve.

Now, overtime is a pretty simple idea: If you have to work more, you should get paid more. And if you want to know why it's so important, just ask some of the folks here who are behind me. Nancy Minor works at an oil refinery in Pennsylvania. Nancy, raise your hand. There you go. [*Laughter*] Yes, give Nancy a big round of applause. So for the last 16 years, Nancy has been a single mom raising and educating four kids on her own, and that is not easy, as you might imagine. She's been able to do it, though, thanks in part to her overtime pay.

For more than 75 years, the 40-hour workweek and the overtime that comes with it have helped countless workers like Nancy get ahead. And it means that when she's asked to make significant sacrifices on behalf of her company, which she's happy to do, they're also looking out for her, recognizing that that puts a strain on her family and—having to get a babysitter and all kinds of things, adjustments that she has to make. It's just fair. It's just the right thing to do.

Unfortunately, today, millions of Americans aren't getting the extra pay they deserve. That's because an exception that was originally meant for high-paid, white-collar employees now covers workers earning as little as $23,660 a year. So if you're making $23,000, you know, typically, you're not high in management. Right? If your salary is even a dollar above the current threshold, you may not be guaranteed overtime. It doesn't matter if what you do is mostly physical work like stocking shelves, it doesn't matter if you're working 50 or 60 or 70 hours a week; your employer doesn't have to pay you a single extra dime.

And I think that's wrong. It doesn't make sense that in some cases this rule actually makes it possible for salaried workers to be paid less than the minimum wage. It's not right when business owners who treat their employees fairly can be undercut by competitors who aren't treating their employees right. If you're working hard, you're barely making ends meet, you should be paid overtime. Period. Because working Americans have struggled through stagnant wages for too long.

Every day, I get letters from folks who just feel like they're treading water. No matter how hard they're working—they're putting in long hours, they're working harder and harder just to get by, but it's always, at the end of the month, real tight. Workers like the ones with me here today, they want to work hard. They don't expect a free lunch, and they don't expect to be fabulously wealthy, they just want a chance to get ahead.

So today I'm taking action to help give more workers that chance. I'm directing Tom Perez, my Secretary of Labor, to restore the common-sense principle behind overtime: If you go above and beyond to help your employer and your economy succeed, then you should share a little bit in that success. And this is going to make a real difference in the lives of millions of Americans, from managers in fast food and retail to office workers, cargo inspectors.

And we're going to do this the right way: We're going to consult with both workers and businesses as we update our overtime rules. We're going to work to simplify the system so it's easier for employers and employees alike. With any kind of change like this, not everybody is going to be happy, but Americans have spent too long working more and getting less in return.

So wherever and whenever I can make sure that our economy rewards hard work and responsibility, that it makes sure that it's treating fairly the workers who are out there building this economy every day, that's what I'm going to do. What every American wants is a paycheck that lets them support their families, experience a little bit of economic security, pass down some hope and optimism to their kids. That's what we're going to be fighting for. That's what I'm going to be fighting for as long as I'm President of the United States.

And with that, I'm going to sign this memo. And I want to thank everybody for being here, especially the folks standing behind me. All right?

Gather round. Now, don't fall off of there. [*Laughter*]

Event participant. That's all right, I've got workman's comp. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, the President signed the memorandum.*]

The President. I've got to make sure I use every pen. There you go. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:27 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nancy Minor, lead operator, Philadelphia Energy Solutions, and her children Alex, Jon, Amanda, and Eric. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Signing the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Conservation and Recreation Act
March 13, 2014

Today I signed the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Conservation and Recreation Act into law. This legislation protects a stunning, 35-mile stretch of Lake Michigan's coastline as a wilderness area and guarantees public access for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits. It also marks the first time Congress has passed a public lands designation in 5 years, ending the longest period of congressional inaction on wilderness protection in nearly 50 years. And it passed with bipartisan support, proving that protecting America's natural beauty is something leaders from both parties can get behind.

Now it's up to Congress to do even more. There are currently dozens of conservation proposals before Congress—many supported by Democrats and Republicans—that would protect important lands across the country and help grow our economy. Congress should act on these proposals, and in the meantime, I will continue to do my part to protect our Federal lands for future generations to enjoy.

NOTE: S. 23, approved March 13, was assigned Public Law No. 113–87.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Enda Kenny of Ireland and an Exchange With Reporters
March 14, 2014

President Obama. Well, it is wonderful to have Taoiseach Kenny back here in the Oval Office. This is one of my favorite times of year because I'm able to join with our friends from Ireland to celebrate the incredible bond that exists between our two countries. I think it is fair to say that there are very few countries around the world where the people-to-people ties are so strong.

And in addition to sharing values and sharing a commitment to democracy, we also share these family ties that go back generations. And I want to once again thank the people of Ireland for the incredible hospitality that they showed me and Michelle and the girls each time that we've had an opportunity to visit Ireland.

I started the meeting today congratulating Taoiseach Kenny on the economic progress that's been made over the last several years in Ireland. Obviously, Ireland was hit hard by the financial crisis and problems with its banking system. It required some very tough decisions that Taoiseach Kenny was willing to take. But what we've now seen is Ireland emerge from its assistance program in a much stronger position on the global stage and in global markets. And as a consequence, I think it's really well positioned to start building for the future and attracting businesses with a highly skilled and well-educated workforce.

And there is tremendous investment by U.S. companies in Ireland. There's tremendous investment here in the United States by Irish companies. We're an example of the mutually beneficial trade that can take place across the Atlantic. And that's why we appreciate Taoiseach Kenny being a strong leader as we move forward on the transatlantic trade agreement that is currently being negotiated between the United States and the EU.

We had an opportunity to discuss a range of global affairs. Obviously, on our minds right now is the situation in Ukraine. Ireland has been a strong voice in the European Council for the need to send a clear message of support for Ukrainian democracy and self-determination and a strong message to Russia that it should not violate the integrity and the sovereignty of its neighbor. We continue to hope that there's a diplomatic solution to be found, but the United States and Europe stand united

not only in its message about Ukrainian sovereignty, but also that there will be consequences if in fact that sovereignty continues to be violated.

We had an opportunity to discuss the fact that Ireland does tremendous work around the world on a whole range of issues. It punches above its weight when it comes to humanitarian efforts. We very much appreciate that.

Closer to home, we both share an interest in seeing Northern Ireland continue to take the next steps that are necessary to finally bring an end to what so often has been a tragic history. I was disappointed—the U.S. Government was disappointed—that the all-party talks did not arrive at a final conclusion and agreement. But we're urging the parties to continue to work and negotiate. And I know that the good influence coming from Dublin will help to encourage them to move out of the past and get the kind of history that—or the kind of future that Northern Ireland so richly deserves.

So I greatly appreciate, Taoiseach, your visit. We look forward to a good lunch and, I suspect, some good Irish music. And we will have a wonderful St. Patrick's Day reception this afternoon. The Taoiseach, I understand, has brought his children here this time, so they'll be able to celebrate alongside us. And to you and your delegation, thank you again for your friendship and support.

Prime Minister Kenny. Let me just say it's a privilege to be here in the Oval Office with the President to continue these traditions and discussions that we've had between our two countries. I might say that on this occasion, we did not have to have a detailed discussion about Ireland's economy. I was able to report to the President the progress our country has made in the last couple years.

The President spoke about the issues that we did discuss. In addition to that, we also discussed the question of immigration reform, which is an issue for Ireland and for many other countries, and we hope to pursue those discussions down at the Capitol building later on with a number of other representatives.

So it's a privilege to be here. It's a great occasion for us. And I've given the President a review of the attitude and the happenings at the European Council meeting, particularly in relation to the situation in Ukraine. And we hope that clarity of message and strength of feeling can prevent very difficult circumstances arising there.

I explained to him the European Council meeting presentation by the Ukrainian President, the discussion we've had at the EPP Congress with Prime Minister Cameron in Downing Street earlier this week, and our hopes that this matter can be resolved.

So again, my privilege to be here on behalf of the Irish people to wish the President, the First Lady, and his family every success in their onerous responsibilities with so many places around the world requiring the assistance of the United States.

President Obama. Thank you.

Thank you, everybody.

Vice President Joe Biden

Q. Will Vice President Biden come to Ireland?

President Obama. You know, Biden wants to come to Ireland. He lobbies me every week to go to Ireland. So I guarantee you, he'll get there. He'll get there.

Thank you, everybody.

Q. Will you come back to join us again?

President Obama. Oh, I'd love—tell everybody in Moneygall I said hi.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Naoise, Ferdia, and Aoibhinn Kenny, children of Prime Minister Kenny. Prime Minister Kenny referred to Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk of Ukraine; and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom. He also referred to the European People's Party (EPP).

Remarks at a St. Patrick's Day Reception
March 14, 2014

Vice President Joe Biden. Hey, everyone, how are you? Welcome to the White House. And happy St. Patrick's Day week.

In 1963, President Kennedy addressed the Irish Parliament, and he said, and I quote, "Our two nations, divided by distance, have been united by history." And that is obvious to every one of you in this room today. And nothing exemplifies that bond more than this building. It was designed by an Irishman named James Hoban—Hoban. Any Hobans in the room? [*Laughter*] I lived across the street with a guy named Johnny Hoban—anyway, it's a long story. [*Laughter*] And it's been occupied by 19 Presidents of Irish descent, and the remaining were despondent they could not make that claim.

So it's wonderful to be here today in the White House with all of you. And I'm reminded of a New Yorker article that Pat Moynihan, God bless him, put on my desk on a St. Patrick's Day back in the early nineties. There was a New Yorker article that had Pat and Mike sitting in a pub in New York, and Pat looks at Mike and says, "Mike, don't you wish you were in Dublin in a pub wishing you were in New York?" [*Laughter*] At least the Irish Catholic family I came from, that's kind of it. As I said today, we Irish are the only people I know who are nostalgic about the future. But—[*laughter*]. Think about that; you'll know it's true.

So my mom, who passed away a couple of years ago, Catherine Eugenia Finnegan Biden, used to say—and I mean this sincerely—her notion was, she said, Joey, to be Irish is about family, it's about faith, but most of all, it's about courage, for without courage, you cannot love with abandon. And I think that's one of the defining elements of—that's the Irish of it—that passion that built both our nations and continues to run through the bloodstream of all Irish Americans.

The history of the journey of this great country, in my view, has always been about promise: the promise that anything is possible. It's about possibilities. And Barack and I—the President and I occasionally talk about that. We're both here in the White House, coming from where we came from; the idea that would happen in any other country is unlikely.

And no one embodies the possibilities and promise of our two nations like the leaders you're about to hear from. There's an old Irish expression: A good friend is like a four-leaf clover, hard to find and lucky to have. Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce to you four of my good friends—and I mean that seriously—the President of the United States and Michelle Obama and the Taoiseach and Fionnuala Kenny.

President Obama. Hello, everybody. Well, welcome to the White House. Once again, today is not technically St. Patrick's Day. [*Laughter*] And once again, none of you seem particularly bothered by this. [*Laughter*] At least, you'll have a weekend to recover. [*Laughter*]

I want to start by welcoming Taoiseach Kenny and his lovely wife Fionnuala, who are not just joining us here today, but more importantly, bringing their children. And we won't embarrass them by pointing them out. [*Laughter*] But we're thrilled to have them here. I'm especially grateful that they're here at a time when the rest of Ireland is focused on the final round of the Six Nations Rugby Tournament. And the last match of the legendary Brian O'Driscoll. I know everyone wants to talk to the Kennys tonight, but let me make sure they have plenty of voice left to cheer on Ireland tomorrow.

Finally, I want to expend—extend a special welcome to Anne Anderson, the newest Ambassador of Ireland to the United States. Anne is the first woman to hold this esteemed position, which means that they might finally get it right. [*Laughter*]

One of Ireland's greatest poets, Patrick Kavanagh, once wrote, "When I wandered over my own hills and talked again to my own people, I looked into the hearts of this life and saw that it was good." That's what St. Patrick's Day is all about. It's about remembering the hills from where so many of us came and the people without whom so many of us would not be here

today. And it is about recognizing how much we owe to the Irish men and women who, to borrow a line from James Joyce, lived and laughed and loved and left.

It's also about appreciating how much of our American character has Irish roots. When the first large wave of Irish immigrants set sail for the New World, many of them were already tired, hungry, and desperately poor. And life wasn't always easier in America. Many jobs were closed to Irish immigrants, with signs announcing "No Irish Need Apply," and many of the ones that were available involved long and dirty and thankless tasks that made life difficult and often too short.

But the Irish worked hard. And they persevered. And they supported each other in tight-knit communities, united by faith, where doors were always open and hands were always extended in hard times. Or, to adapt a quote from the author Finley Peter Dunne, there wasn't one struggling family in this world that wasn't carrying three others on its back. And together, they were driven by that most American of ideas, that with enough effort, anybody can build a decent life for their families and leave a better life for their children.

And eventually, that's exactly what happened. In Newburyport, Massachusetts, in the early 20th century, two-thirds of Irish Americans were members of the working class, just one-third in the middle class. But if you looked at the third generation alone—the grandchildren of Irish immigrants—the numbers were reversed. A majority had broken into the middle class.

So the American Dream has always been the Irish American Dream. And that's why so many of you have been working with us to fix our broken immigration system. Under today's laws, many of your parents and grandparents may not have made it here. And too many men and women who want to contribute to our economy are being denied that chance. There's no reason why we can't do for this generation of immigrants what was done for a previous generation, to give them that chance. [*Applause*] All right?

Because like millions of immigrants, the sons and daughters of Erin have always lived by the words of the great Seamus Heaney, who passed away last year: "Believe that further shore is reachable from here. Believe in miracles."

And before the G–8 summit last June, Michelle and I got a chance to visit Belfast. We saw firsthand the tremendous progress that's been made in Northern Ireland since the Good Friday agreement was signed 16 years ago, as well as the long road that still lies ahead.

And before my speech at the Waterfront, Michelle was introduced by a 16-year-old girl named Hannah Nelson. And Hannah is here—[*applause*]—there she is, right there. Hey, Hannah. [*Laughter*] Hannah is a member of the first generation of Northern Irish to grow up knowing the possibilities of peace. And in her introduction, she said: "Often in Northern Ireland, we hear about our past. . . . But truthfully, we should not let the past pull us apart and stop us moving forward. . . . We need to listen to each other and we need to compromise. Most importantly, we need to clearly value each other."

And so if Hannah and that generation reflects such wisdom, I think their elders, all of us, need to pay attention, follow their advice. Young people like Hannah give us hope for the future because they're driven by the same optimism, the same belief in miracles that drove their ancestors. But they also benefit from something that didn't exist for members of the previous generation, and that's a hard-won peace that is theirs to nurture and advance. They have an example of what's possible.

So to the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland, I'll close by paraphrasing Seamus Heaney again. The Ireland you now inhabit is one that your contemporaries have helped imagine. But the Ireland that you will inhabit is one your children are helping to build, one that's more just and more peaceful and more tolerant and more fair.

And with that, I want to propose a toast. And I'm going to—this is the best that I can do, water. [*Laughter*] Clearly, they had the wrong day. [*Laughter*] May our children continue to

enjoy the bonds we share tonight, of family, faith, friendship, and hope for the future. "So fill me to the parting glass; Good night and joy be with you all."

And now it is my pleasure to introduce my good friend, Taoiseach Kenny.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Enda Kenny of Ireland spoke briefly in Irish, and no translation was provided.*]

Prime Minister Kenny. Welcome, everybody, here to the White House. Mr. President and First Lady Michelle, Mr. Vice President, Dr. Biden, ladies and gentlemen: Fionnuala and I are delighted to be with you here at the White House to celebrate the Feast of St. Patrick. Thank you for your warm hospitality in honor of Ireland and of the Irish people.

Thank you for the toast, Mr. President. I didn't think that austerity was biting that far into the White House. [*Laughter*] Really.

As we make strides in our own economic recovery, it is wonderful to know that our country still occupies such a special place in the heart and the mind of the United States of America.

Mr. President, in June last year, we met at the G–8 summit in Fermanagh. Next day, at Dublin, came out with a warm summer welcome for Michelle and Malia and Sasha. And tonight, sir, I just want to make something very clear: I have heard what I regard the insider speculation surrounding your attributed desire to keep your Vice President off our island as being wholly without foundation. [*Laughter*] And at the same time, summoning the persuasive spirit of St. Patrick, I did put in a word for Joe this morning. [*Laughter*] His work is invaluable. His listening ear is critical. Thank you, Mr. President, for authorizing him to travel to Ireland. We have a golf date.

So I look forward to welcoming him home with Jill to the land of our forebears, to the land of his people and of our people, together, as we say, in—[*inaudible*]—*Oileán ár sinsear*—the island of our ancestors—where 5 million of us live and 70 million call home. [*Laughter*] And home—and our sense of it—is what makes us who we are as Irish people.

Just as the Forbes magazine recently was declaring Ireland to be the best country in the world for business, out there in the Atlantic, east of here, storms Hercules and Darwin were making a declaration of their own, through the awesome power of nature, gifting us remnants of Neolithic settlements, ghosts of drowned oak forests, 7,000-years-old remnants uncovered on our beaches and land near sea.

So, Mr. President, these are excavations not just of our history, but of life on our island, the geology of our heart. And they signal our tradition and our capacity to endure and to adapt, to survive and to thrive, to know fear, to know loss, and yet to conscript new generations to courage and vision and a brilliant future across the millennia.

That's why, today, we have the most adaptable workforce in the world and the youngest workforce in the European Union. That's why in no other country in the world do U.S. multinationals and U.S. emerging companies have as big a presence as they have in our country.

And according to the received wisdom of its not being enough to do well, but to do good, so I'm proud to say that despite our difficulties, we are the most generous people in Europe in our giving to those in need, and every day since the United Nations was founded, the Irish are somewhere on the globe involved in peacekeeping or humanitarian duties. And as we are, Mr. President, we are ever mindful of the kindness that America, in turn, has shown to us and to our people.

And this evening, as we celebrate St. Patrick, who was himself an immigrant, Mr. President, I am heartened by your words, and I thank you for all you are doing and others in this great country are doing to help our men and women living here undocumented. We know America will sort this out.

I'm thrilled you mentioned young Hannah. I saw her deliver her words last year on television. Congratulations. And from you to Mark Pollock, whom I see here in front of me, without sight, without the capability of walking, yet he has done extraordinary things in a sense of his vision and his courage of what we can do

with our shared humanity. You're very welcome here.

So, sir, as we take our leave here this evening, we do remember absent friends whom you've mentioned, in particular, he who documented the dream, the farmer's son, the known blood relative of the gods, Seamus Heaney. And in his memory, and in honor of St. Patrick, let us do as he asks when he said, "Go beyond what's reliable . . . and recollect how bold you were when I visited you first with departures you cannot go back on."

So, Mr. President, First Lady, Ireland has made its departure. There is no going back. Tonight, then, let our two nations, our two countries, Ireland and the United States, heed and live the last words of Seamus Heaney texted to his wife before he left, "*Noli timere*"—"Do not be afraid."

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Naoise, Ferdia, and Aoibhinn Kenny, children of Prime Minister Kenny; Brian O'Driscoll, outside center, Ireland's Leinster provincial rugby team; and Hannah Nelson, winner of an essay contest sponsored by the U.S. consulate in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Prime Minister Kenny referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Biden; and adventure athlete, speaker, and author Mark Pollock.

The President's Weekly Address
March 15, 2014

Hi, everybody. In this year of action, I'm doing everything I can, with or without Congress, to expand opportunity for more Americans. This week, I ordered a review of our Nation's overtime rules, to give more Americans the chance to earn the overtime pay they've worked for.

Here's why this matters. Our businesses have created 8.7 million new jobs over the past 4 years. But in many ways, the trends that have battered the middle class for decades have grown even starker. While those at the top are doing better than ever, average wages have barely budged. Too many Americans are working harder than ever just to keep up.

We've got to build an economy that works for everybody, not just for the fortunate few. We know from our history that our economy grows best from the middle out, when growth is more widely shared. So we've got to restore opportunity for all: the idea that with hard work and responsibility, you can get ahead.

Now, for more than 75 years, the 40-hour workweek and the overtime protections that come with it have helped countless workers climb the ladder of success. But today, an overtime exception originally meant for highly paid employees now applies to workers who earn as little as $23,660 a year. It doesn't matter if you do mostly physical labor or if you work 50, 60, even 70 hours a week. Your employer may not have to pay you a single extra dime.

In some cases, this rule makes it possible for workers earning a salary to actually be paid less than the minimum wage. And it means that business owners who treat their employees fairly can be undercut by competitors who don't. That's not right. So we're going to update those overtime rules to restore that basic principle that if you have to work more, you should be able to earn more. And we'll do it by consulting workers and businesses and simplifying the system so it's easier for everyone.

Americans have spent too long working more and getting less in return. So wherever and whenever I can make sure that our economy rewards hard work and responsibility, that's what I'm going to do. Because what every American wants is a paycheck that lets them support their families, know a little economic security, and pass down some hope and optimism to their kids. That's something worth fighting for. And I'll keep fighting for it as long as I'm President.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:05 p.m. on March 14 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on March 15. In his remarks, he referred to the memorandum of March 13 on updating and modernizing overtime regulations. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 14, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on March 15.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Blocking Property of Additional Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine
March 16, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") expanding the scope of the national emergency I declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in Ukraine.

In the order, I find that the actions and policies of the Government of the Russian Federation with respect to Ukraine—including the recent deployment of Russian Federation military forces in the Crimea region of Ukraine—undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets, and thereby constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. The order blocks the property and interests in property of persons listed in an Annex to the order. The order also blocks the property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to be an official of the Government of the Russian Federation;
- to operate in the arms and related materiel sector in the Russian Federation;
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly:
  - a senior official of the Government of the Russian Federation; or
  - a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of:
  - a senior official of the Government of the Russian Federation; or
  - a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien determined to meet one or more of the above criteria.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the

Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 17. The letter referred to Executive Order 13661, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Situation in Ukraine
March 17, 2014

Good morning, everybody. In recent months, as the citizens of Ukraine have made their voices heard, we have been guided by a fundamental principle: The future of Ukraine must be decided by the people of Ukraine. That means Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected and international law must be upheld.

And so Russia's decision to send troops into Crimea has rightly drawn global condemnation. From the start, the United States has mobilized the international community in support of Ukraine to isolate Russia for its actions and to reassure our allies and partners. We saw this international unity again over the weekend, when Russia stood alone in the U.N. Security Council defending its actions in Crimea. And as I told President Putin yesterday, the referendum in Crimea was a clear violation of Ukrainian constitutions and international law and it will not be recognized by the international community.

Today I'm announcing a series of measures that will continue to increase the cost on Russia and on those responsible for what is happening in Ukraine. First, as authorized by the Executive order I signed 2 weeks ago, we are imposing sanctions on specific individuals responsible for undermining the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and Government of Ukraine. We're making it clear that there are consequences for their actions.

Second, I have signed a new Executive order that expands the scope of our sanctions. As an initial step, I'm authorizing sanctions on Russian officials, entities operating in the arms sector in Russia, and individuals who provide material support to senior officials of the Russian Government. And if Russia continues to interfere in Ukraine, we stand ready to impose further sanctions.

Third, we're continuing our close consultations with our European partners, who today in Brussels moved ahead with their own sanctions against Russia. Tonight Vice President Biden departs for Europe, where he will meet with the leaders of our NATO allies: Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. And I'll be traveling to Europe next week. Our message will be clear: As NATO allies, we have a solemn commitment to our collective defense, and we will uphold this commitment.

Fourth, we'll continue to make clear to Russia that further provocations will achieve nothing except to further isolate Russia and diminish its place in the world. The international community will continue to stand together to oppose any violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and continued Russian military intervention in Ukraine will only deepen Russia's diplomatic isolation and exact a greater toll on the Russian economy.

Going forward, we can calibrate our response based on whether Russia chooses to escalate or to deescalate the situation. Now, I believe there's still a path to resolve this situation diplomatically in a way that addresses the interests of both Russia and Ukraine. That includes Russia pulling its forces in Crimea back to their bases, supporting the deployment of additional international monitors in Ukraine, and engaging in dialogue with the Ukrainian Government, which has indicated its openness to pursuing constitutional reform as they move forward towards elections this spring.

But throughout this process, we're going to stand firm in our unwavering support for Ukraine. As I told Prime Minister Yatsenyuk last week, the United States stands with the people of Ukraine and their right to determine their own destiny. We're going to keep working with Congress and our international partners to offer Ukraine the economic support that it needs to weather this crisis and to improve the daily lives of the Ukrainian people.

And as we go forward, we'll continue to look at the range of ways we can help our Ukrainian

friends achieve their universal rights and the security, prosperity, and dignity that they deserve. Thanks very much. And Jay, I think, will be available for questions. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney. He also referred to Executive Orders 13660 and 13661, which are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority
March 17, 2014

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome President Abbas to the Oval Office. It was a year ago this week that I had the opportunity to visit the Palestinian Territories and very much appreciated the hospitality that President Abbas showed when I was there. I had a wonderful time meeting with a wide range of civil society and officials and business leaders in the Palestinian Territories, including young people who were inspiring and, I think, had great hope for the future.

Today we're going to spend the bulk of our time talking about something that we've been working on for a very long time and obviously President Abbas has been working on a long time, and that is, how do we achieve a comprehensive peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

And I have to commend President Abbas. He has been somebody who has consistently renounced violence, has consistently sought a diplomatic and peaceful solution that allows for two states, side by side, in peace and security: a state that allows for the dignity and sovereignty of the Palestinian people and a state that allows for Israelis to feel secure and at peace with their neighbors.

This is obviously an elusive goal, and there's a reason why it's taken decades for us to even get to the point where we are now. But we remain convinced that there is an opportunity. And I think everybody understands the outlines of what a peace deal would look like, involving a territorial compromise on both sides based on '67 lines with mutually agreed upon swaps that would ensure that Israel was secure, but would also ensure that the Palestinians have a sovereign state in which they can achieve the aspirations that they've held for so long.

Secretary Kerry is here today and has been working diligently with all sides. And as I said to Prime Minister Netanyahu when he was here just a couple of weeks ago, I believe that now is the time for not just the leaders of both sides, but also the peoples of both sides, to embrace this opportunity for peace. But we're going to have a lot of details that we're going to have to discuss. It's very hard; it's very challenging. We're going to have to take some tough political decisions and risks if we're able to move it forward. And my hope is, is that we can continue to see progress in the coming days and weeks.

I also want to point out that the Palestinian Authority has continued to try to build strong institutions in preparation for a day in which the Palestinians have their own state, and I will continue to emphasize the importance of rule of law, transparency, and effective reform so that not only do the Palestinians ultimately have a state on paper, but more importantly, they have one that actually delivers on behalf of their people.

The United States obviously has been a strong supporter of the Palestinian Authority. We're the largest humanitarian donor and continue to help to try to foster economic development and opportunity and prosperity for people, particularly young people like those that I met.

So, Mr. President, welcome. I look forward to a productive discussion and continue to hope that you and Prime Minister Netanyahu, but more importantly, the people of the Palestinian Territories and Israel, are ready to move forward in a new spirit of cooperation and compromise.

Thank you very much.

President Abbas. Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you for allowing us this opportunity, which we consider to be historic, for us to come here to the White House so that the efforts that you and Mr. Kerry expend—and these are great efforts—would be successful so that we can also reach a lasting peace to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

And I would like to also seize this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for the economic and political support that the U.S. is extending to the Palestinian state so that it can stand on its own feet.

I would also like to affirm what you have said, that we are working for a solution that is based on international legitimacy and also the borders—the 1967 borders so that the Palestinians can have their own independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital and so that we can find a fair and lasting solution to the refugee problem.

We don't have any time to waste. Time is not on our side, especially given the very difficult situation that the Middle East is experiencing and the entire region is facing. And we hope that we would be able to seize this opportunity to achieve a lasting peace.

Since 1988 and into 1993, we have been extending our hands to our Israeli neighbors so that we can reach a fair and lasting peace to this problem. Since 1988, we have recognized international legitimacy resolutions, and in—and this was a very courageous step on the part of the Palestinian leadership. And in 1993, we recognized the State of Israel.

Mr. President, we have an agreement with Israel that was brokered by Mr. Kerry concerning the release of the fourth batch of prisoners, and we are hopeful that the last—that the fourth batch would be released by the 29th of March because this will give a very solid impression about the seriousness of these efforts to achieve peace.

Mr. President, I'm aware that you have several international concerns in various places around the world, and we know that you are dedicating your time and effort for peace, and so are the teams that are working on this. We count on these efforts, and we will build on them because we consider this to be a historic opportunity to achieve peace.

President Obama. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel. President Abbas spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks on Presenting the Medal of Honor to 24 Army Veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War

March 18, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated. Well, welcome to the White House.

The presentation of our Nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, is always a special occasion. But today it is truly historic. This is the single largest group of servicemembers to be awarded the Medal of Honor since the Second World War. And with several of these soldiers recognized for their valor during that war, this ceremony is 70 years in the making. As one family member has said, this is long overdue.

Many of these families—and I had a chance to meet all of them who are present here today—they've known these stories of heroism for decades. Still, they were pretty surprised when we called them to break the news about the Medal of Honor. Some of them thought it was a prank. [*Laughter*] Some of them thought

it was a scam. A few of them thought it might be some trick to get their credit card number. [*Laughter*] When I called Melvin Morris, who we'll recognize in a moment for his actions in Vietnam, his first reaction was, "Oh, my God, what have I done?" [*Laughter*] When I told him it was all good—the Medal of Honor—I could hear through the phone, he almost passed out. [*Laughter*]

You see, for their gallantry under fire each of these soldiers was long ago recognized with the Army's second highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross. But ask their fellow veterans, ask their families, and they'll tell you that their extraordinary deeds merited the highest recognition. And today we have the chance to set the record straight.

This ceremony reminds us of one of the enduring qualities that makes America great, that makes us exceptional. No nation is perfect, but here in America, we confront our imperfections and face a sometimes painful past, including the truth that some of these soldiers fought and died for a country that did not always see them as equal. So with each generation we keep on striving to live up to our ideals of freedom and equality and to recognize the dignity and patriotism of every person, no matter who they are, what they look like, or how they pray.

And that's why, more than a decade ago, Congress mandated a review to make sure that the heroism of our veterans wasn't overlooked because of prejudice or discrimination. Our military reviewed thousands of war records. They teamed up with veterans groups and museums to get this right. It was painstaking work, made even harder because sometimes, our servicemembers felt as if they needed to change their last names to fit in. That tells a story about our past. But ultimately, after years of review, these two dozen soldiers—among them Hispanic, African American, and Jewish veterans—were identified as having earned the Medal of Honor. This is the length to which America will go to make sure everyone who serves under our proud flag receives the thanks that they deserve.

So this is going to be a long ceremony. [*Laughter*] We're going to read all 24 citations because every one is a story of bravery that deserves to be told. But first, I want to take just a few minutes to describe the Americans behind these actions, the men these families know, the brilliant lives behind the smiling faces in those old photographs, and how they reflected all the beauty and diversity of the country that they served.

They were Americans by birth and Americans by choice, immigrants, including one who was not yet even a citizen. They grew up in big city neighborhoods like Brooklyn, rural communities like Hooper, Nebraska, small towns like Puerto Rico. They loved to fish and play baseball. They were sons who made their parents proud and brothers who their siblings looked up to. They were so young, many in their early twenties. And when their country went to war, they answered the call. They put on the uniform and hugged their families goodbye. Some of them hugged the wives and children that they'd never see again.

They fought in the rocky hills of Italy, the blood-stained beaches of France, in the freezing mountains of Korea, the humid jungles of Vietnam. Their courage almost defies imagination. When you read the records of these individuals, it's unimaginable, the valor that they displayed. Running into bullets. Charging machine gun nests and climbing aboard tanks and taking them out. Covering their comrades so they could make it to safety. Holding back enemies, wave after wave, even when the combat was hand to hand. Manning their posts—some to their very last breaths—so that their comrades might live.

Of the 24 American soldiers we honor today, 10 never came home. One of them—Corporal Joe Baldonado, from the Korean war—is still missing, reminding us that, as a nation, we have a scared obligation to keep working to give the families of our missing servicemembers from all wars a full accounting of their loved ones.

Through their grief, the families of our fallen summoned the strength to carry on: wives whose hearts ached for their husbands, sons

and daughters who grew up without their dad, nieces and nephews and grandchildren. And these families join us here today. And they know, more than most, that because others laid down their lives for us, we've been able to live our lives in freedom, pursue our dreams. So there's a legacy here born of sacrifice.

That includes a soldier's nephew, a kid from New York, who grew up to become one of the great rock stars of all time and who honors his uncle here today. It includes soldiers who came home and took different paths: some continuing to serve in uniform, some beginning new careers, some getting married and raising their kids, serving their communities, taking care of their fellow vets.

These veterans lived out their lives in the country that they helped to defend and doing what they love, like William Leonard, who at age 71 passed away in his backyard, sitting in his chair, listening to his beloved Yankees play on the radio.

And that's where this story might have ended. But Mitchel Libman, a friend of one of these soldiers and an Army vet himself, set out on a mission. He and his wife Marilyn spent years writing letters and working with Congress and our military to get this done. And so we thank all those who worked so hard for so long to bring us to this moment, especially Marilyn and Mitchel—now 83 years old—who I'd ask to stand so that we can all say thank you.

Finally, of these 24 soldiers, 3 remain with us and have joined us here today, men who remind us that sometimes, the heroes we seek are right in front of us, literally living right next door.

Most days, you can find Jose Rodela at his San Antonio home, a 76-year-old retiree who enjoys watching baseball on TV and working on his 1975 Chevy pickup and mowing the grass for his neighbors. Joe is such a humble guy—Jose is such a humble guy that he did not even mention the ceremony to his neighbors, who I think would be pretty shocked to turn on the news tonight—[*laughter*]—and see that the guy who cuts their lawn is getting the Medal of Honor. [*Laughter*] Today we remember how 32-year-old Sergeant First Class Rodela fought through his wounds in Vietnam and rallied his men during 18 hours of constant combat.

Most days, you can find Melvin Morris at home in Port St. John, Florida, 72 years old, a retired salesman and a great-grandfather. You'll find him working on his boat, going fishing, reading the Bible, spending time with his beautiful wife Mary, married 53 years this month. You're going to have to give me some tips. [*Laughter*] I'm—we're not that far along yet. [*Laughter*] Today we remember how 27-year-old Staff Sergeant Morris, one of our Nation's very first Green Berets—one of our very first Green Berets. Think about that. I mean, that's legendary—how Staff Sergeant Morris recovered a fallen comrade in Vietnam, took out several enemy bunkers and kept going even after he was shot three times.

And on most days, you can find Santiago Erevia at home in San Antonio. He's a 68-year-old retired postal worker. He's fixing up his house, typically, tending to the garden, going on walks with his wife, or doing some pushups to stay in shape. [*Laughter*] Today we remember how 23-year-old Specialist-4 Erevia, under a hail of bullets in Vietnam, gave first aid to his wounded comrades and singlehandedly destroyed four enemy bunkers.

These are extraordinary Americans. They are exemplary soldiers. And so I want to begin by welcoming Santiago Erevia to stage for the reading of the citation.

[*At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Tiffany F. Hill, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citation. The President then presented the medal, assisted by Lt. Col. S. Lee Meyer, USMC, Marine Corps Aide to the President. After receiving the medal, S4 Erevia returned to his seat. Sfc. Melvin Morris was then called to the stage for the reading of the citation. Maj. Matthew Newell, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President presented the medal. After receiving the medal, Sfc. Morris returned to his seat. Sfc. Jose Rodela was then called to the stage for the reading of the citation. Lt. Cmdr. Hill read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

The President. Before Jose returns to his seat, I just want to ask Santiago and Melvin to return to the stage, please. This is a remarkable moment. And as they come up, I'd like to recall——

[*The President greeted S4 Erevia and Sfc. Morris as they returned to the stage.*]

The President. As they take their positions, I'd like to recall the words of a poet:

> Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
> One equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Santiago Erevia, Melvin Morris, Jose Rodela: In the thick of the fight, all those years ago, for your comrades and your country, you refused to yield. And on behalf of a grateful nation, we all want to thank you for inspiring us—then and now—with your strength, your will, and your heroic hearts.

Please give them a big round of applause.

Gentlemen, thank you. Please take your seats. We'll proceed with the rest of the ceremony.

[*Medals were presented posthumously to the following individuals: S4 Leonard L. Alvarado, Sfc. Felix M. Conde-Falcon, S4 Ardie R. Copas, S4 Jesus S. Duran, Sgt. Candelario Garcia, Cpl. Joe R. Baldonado, Cpl. Victor H. Espinoza, Sgt. Eduardo C. Gomez, Pfc. Leonard M. Kravitz, Sgt. Juan E. Negron, M. Sgt. Mike C. Pena, Pvt. Demensio Rivera, Pvt. Miguel A. Vera, Sgt. Jack Weinstein, Pvt. Pedro Cano, Pvt. Joe Gandara, Pfc. Salvador J. Lara, Pfc. William F. Leonard, S. Sgt. Manuel V. Mendoza, Sgt. Alfred B. Nietzel, and 1st Lt. Donald K. Schwab. For each recipient, the citation was read, and the President then presented the medal to a surviving relative.*]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, it is very rare where we have the opportunity to reflect on the extraordinary courage and patriotism of such a remarkable collection of men. We are so grateful to them. We are so grateful to their families. It makes us proud, and it makes us inspired. And so, before we conclude the program, I would ask all those who have witnessed this extraordinary day to please rise and give these latest recipients of the Medal of Honor your warmest applause.

Chaplain, would you give us the benediction?

[*Maj. Gen. Donald L. Rutherford, USA, Army Chief of Chaplains, said a prayer.*]

Thank you so much, everybody. This concludes our program. But please have an opportunity to enjoy the White House. We are so grateful that all of you had a chance to come. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:33 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Lenny A. Kravitz, nephew of Medal of Honor recipient Leonard M. Kravitz; Marilyn Libman, wife of Mitchel Libman, a Korean war veteran who spent 60 years writing letters to the Pentagon urging them to award Leonard M. Kravitz the Medal of Honor; Mary Morris, wife of Medal of Honor recipient Melvin Morris; and Leticia Erevia, wife of Medal of Honor recipient Santiago J. Erevia. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

Remarks at a White House Screening of "Cesar Chavez"
March 19, 2014

The President. Welcome to the White House. We are here to celebrate the life of an American hero. Cesar Chavez was a man who devoted this brief time that we have on Earth

to making sure that this country lived up to some of its lofty ideals, the words of our founding, the idea that all of us are created equal; a man who organized others to widen the circle of opportunity not just for the people he knew, but for future generations.

And some of those future generations are here today. Cesar's son Paul is here. Some of his—there he is. I was looking for him. [*Laughter*] He's right there. Some of his children—some of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren are here. I did not have the honor of knowing Mr. Chavez, but I'd imagine that he'd be pretty proud to know that his granddaughter works in the White House. And not only does she know how to deliver an outstanding introduction—[*laughter*]—but she also does just an extraordinary job carrying on his work organizing people, but now all across the country, to engage on issues that are of importance to all Americans. And Julie just does an extraordinary job. We're so proud of her. So thank you, Julie, for the great introduction.

A couple of other acknowledgements: I want to acknowledge an outstanding Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi. The great Dolores Huerta, our dear friend who cofounded the United Farm Workers along with Cesar. Rosario told me she is playing Dolores, and I thought I can see that; there's the same fire. I did have to say Rosario is a little taller. Just a little bit. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the UFW's current president, Arturo Rodriguez, a great friend of ours. Thank you. And I want to thank Diego Luna and the entire cast of "Cesar Chavez." The—I told him I loved "Y Tu Mamá También." [*Laughter*] But we can't screen that at the White House. [*Laughter*] It's a great movie, but this is a little more family friendly here. [*Laughter*]

This movie, this film tells the story of a man guided by an enormous faith: faith in a righteous cause and a loving God and the dignity of every human being. And it reminds us how, throughout our history, that faith has been tested and that it falls to ordinary Americans, ordinary people, to fight and restore that faith.

Cesar himself said that he spent his first 20 years working as an organizer without a single major victory. But he never gave up. He kept on going, and the world is a better place because he did. And that's one of the great lessons of his life. You don't give up the fight. No matter how long it takes, no matter how long the odds, you keep on going, fueled by a simple creed: *Sí, se puede.*

Sometimes, people ask me—in fact, while we were backstage, somebody said, oh, you look pretty good. You look better than I expected. [*Laughter*] The implication being that there might be reason for me not to look good. [*Laughter*] But part of what sustains me and part of what I've said in the past—and some of you who have been in meetings with me and when we've experienced setbacks or frustrations on particular issues—I've tried to remind people, change is hard. It doesn't happen easily. It doesn't happen smoothly or painlessly. It happens because you put your shoulder behind the wheel and you keep on pushing. And then sometimes, it's going to roll back a little bit on you. And then you got to dig in, and you've got to push some more.

And Cesar Chavez understood that. You have to push, and you create this space. And sometimes, you won't even see all the victories that are achieved, but you've invested that time and that effort, and you've inspired others. And eventually, things change, and you pass the baton, and future generations then continue this process.

So we've got a lot of causes that are worth fighting for. We've got to keep fighting to make sure that every American has access to quality, affordable health care. We were very persistent about getting that website fixed. It's fixed now. [*Laughter*] And we've got more than 5 million people signed up. But we've got 2 more weeks to sign them up. So cuidadodesalud.gov—[*laughter*]—get on the website, spread the word.

We've got to keep fighting to make sure that our economy rewards the hard work of every American with a fair and living wage and equal pay for equal work. We've got to keep working to fix our broken immigration system. This is an example of where this is hard, but we've made progress, and we are going to get this

done. This is going to happen. It's not a matter of if, just a matter of when. And I want it to happen now, so we are going to keep on pushing.

Mr. Chavez once said, "When you have people together who believe in something very strongly—whether it's religion or politics or unions—things happen." And today, we've got labor leaders and CEOs and faith leaders and law enforcement, and they've come together, and they've said it's time to fix this broken immigration system. We've got Democrats and Republicans who have now passed in the Senate a comprehensive bill. And if we stay united, things will happen, things will get done.

And none of us can claim to know exactly what Cesar would have said about this fight or any other. But I do think he would want us to remember that the debates we have are less about policy than they are about people. They're about the lives of men and women and the young and not so young, who want nothing more than the chance to work hard, support their families, provide a future for their kids and their grandkids, earn their place in our American story. That's what this is all about. They're about our highest hopes and aspirations for this country that we love and the country that we leave for future generations.

As this film reminds us, that was the cause of Cesar Chavez's life, and I hope this afternoon, it's going to inspire all of us in the causes that we have to fight as well.

I cannot stay for the screening. I've been promised by our director that I'm—or producer or somebody is going to get me the CD.

Audience member. DVD.

The President. They're—whatever. [*Laughter*] I'm a little technologically challenged. [*Laughter*] The DVD. [*Laughter*] The point is, I'm going to watch it this weekend. Michelle and the girls are on their way to China. It's very lonely at home, so nothing better than to see an inspiring film. And I'm really looking forward to seeing a chronicled life of one of my heroes and one of the people who inspired me to get into the work that I've gotten into. So thank you for sharing it with us. All right?

God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Paul F. Chavez, son of late United Farm Workers cofounder Cesar E. Chavez; Deputy Director of Public Engagement Julie Chavez Rodriguez; actor Rosario Dawson, who portrayed United Farm Worker cofounder Dolores C. Huerta in the film "Cesar Chavez"; and Diego Luna, director, "Cesar Chavez."

Statement on the Death of Robert S. Strauss
March 19, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to hear of the passing of Bob Strauss. Bob was one of the greatest leaders the Democratic Party ever had, yet Presidents of both parties relied on his advice, his instincts, and his passion for public service, not to mention his well-honed sense of humor. As President Carter's Trade Representative, he helped open new markets for American exports. As President Bush's last Ambassador to the Soviet Union and first Ambassador to the Russian Federation, he stood up for our interests and values at a moment of immense change. Bob was truly one of a kind, and our thoughts are with his children, his family, and his friends too numerous to count.

NOTE: The statement referred to President George H.W. Bush; and Robert A. Strauss, Sr., Richard Strauss, and Susan Breen, children of Mr. Strauss.

Remarks on the Situation in Ukraine
March 20, 2014

Good morning, everybody. I wanted to provide an update on the situation in Ukraine and the steps that the United States is taking in response.

Over the last several days, we've continued to be deeply concerned by events in Ukraine. We've seen an illegal referendum in Crimea; an illegitimate move by the Russians to annex Crimea; and dangerous risks of escalation, including threats to Ukrainian personnel in Crimea and threats to southern and eastern Ukraine as well. These are all choices that the Russian Government has made, choices that have been rejected by the international community, as well as the Government of Ukraine. And because of these choices, the United States is today moving, as we said we would, to impose additional costs on Russia.

Based on the Executive order that I signed in response to Russia's initial intervention in Ukraine, we're imposing sanctions on more senior officials of the Russian Government. In addition, we are today sanctioning a number of other individuals with substantial resources and influence who provide material support to the Russian leadership, as well as a bank that provides material support to these individuals.

Now, we're taking these steps as part of our response to what Russia has already done in Crimea. At the same time, the world is watching with grave concern as Russia has positioned its military in a way that could lead to further incursions into southern and eastern Ukraine. For this reason, we've been working closely with our European partners to develop more severe actions that could be taken if Russia continues to escalate the situation.

As part of that process, I signed a new Executive order today that gives us the authority to impose sanctions not just on individuals, but on key sectors of the Russian economy. This is not our preferred outcome. These sanctions would not only have a significant impact on the Russian economy, but could also be disruptive to the global economy. However, Russia must know that further escalation will only isolate it further from the international community. The basic principles that govern relations between nations in Europe and around the world must be upheld in the 21st century. That includes respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the notion that nations do not simply redraw borders or make decisions at the expense of their neighbors simply because they are larger or more powerful.

One of our other top priorities continues to be providing assistance to the Government of Ukraine so it can stabilize its economy and meet the basic needs of the Ukrainian people. As I travel to Europe next week to meet with the G–7 and other European and Asian allies, I once again urge Congress to pass legislation that is necessary to provide this assistance. And do it right away. Expressions of support are not enough. We need action. I also hope that the IMF moves swiftly to provide a significant package of support for Ukrainians as they pursue reforms.

In Europe, I'll also be reinforcing a message that Vice President Biden carried to Poland and the Baltic States this week: America's support for our NATO allies is unwavering. We're bound together by our profound article 5 commitment to defend one another and by a set of shared values that so many generations sacrificed for. We've already increased our support for our Eastern European allies, and we will continue to strengthen NATO's collective defense, and we will step up our cooperation with Europe on economic and energy issues as well.

Now, let me close by making a final point. Diplomacy between the United States and Russia continues. We've emphasized that Russia still has a different path available, one that deescalates the situation and one that involves Russia pursuing a diplomatic solution with the Government in Kiev, with the support of the international community. The Russian people need to know, and Mr. Putin needs to understand, that the Ukrainians shouldn't have to choose between the West and Russia. We want the Ukrainian people to determine their own

destiny and to have good relations with the United States, with Russia, with Europe, with anyone that they choose. That can only happen if Russia also recognized the rights of all the Ukrainian people to determine their future as free individuals and as a sovereign nation, rights that people and nations around the world understand and support.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. He also referred to Executive Orders 13660, 13661, and 13662, which are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Blocking Property of Additional Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine
March 20, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") further expanding the scope of the national emergency I declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, and expanded in Executive Order 13661 of March 16, 2014, with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in Ukraine.

In the order, I find that the actions and policies of the Government of the Russian Federation with respect to Ukraine—including its purported annexation of Crimea and its use of force in Ukraine—undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets, and thereby constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. The order blocks the property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to operate in such sectors of the Russian Federation economy as may be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, such as financial services, energy, metals and mining, engineering, and defense and related materiel;
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien determined to meet one or more of the above criteria. I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The letter referred to Executive Order 13662, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at Valencia College, West Campus, in Orlando, Florida
March 20, 2014

The President. Hello, Valencia! Well, thank you so much. It is great to be back in Orlando. I'm glad some of you came to work while a lot of folks are pretending to work and watching—[*laughter*]—the tournament. I know there must be some Gators fans around here. They are an outstanding team. I put out my men's bracket. I've got them going to the Final Four.

Audience member. They're going to win!

The President. And they could win the whole thing, in which case, I won't win the billion dollars. [*Laughter*] You can only pick one winner. There are 63 colleges mad at me. [*Laughter*] But—so I understand there are some neighbors up the road in Gainesville who are not happy with me. [*Laughter*] There will be even more tomorrow when I release my women's bracket, because you can't please anybody.

But we've got some terrific elected officials here. I just want to, in particular, thank the mayor of Orlando, Buddy Dyer, who's been a great friend. And give him a big round of applause. And I want to thank the president of Valencia College, Sandy—[*applause*]—where's Sandy? Sandy Shugart, there he is. We've got the president of the West Campus, who I just had an amazing conversation with, Falecia Williams. Where's Falecia? Right there. I want to thank everybody here at Valencia for having me.

A few years ago, I announced a new competition called the Aspen Prize to recognize exceptional community colleges, and lo and behold—[*laughter*]—your school, Valencia, was the very first school in the entire country to win this prize, and which—[*applause*]. So between the students' hard work, the outstanding faculty, the administrators who are making sure everybody has what they need to succeed, Valencia graduates are leaving here ready for a career, ready to continue their education, ready to pursue their dreams, wherever they may lead.

And so this college represents what's best in America: the idea that here in this country, if you work hard, you can get ahead. And restoring that opportunity for every American, that's been our driving focus as a country. That's driven everything I've done since I came into office.

And today, we're at a moment when, after the first—after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, after just some devastating losses that people had—and their homes or their retirement accounts or their jobs—now we've seen businesses creating 8.7 million new jobs over the past 4 years. American manufacturers are adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. In American energy, we're producing more oil here at home than we buy from other countries for the first time in two decades. We're generating more renewable energy. The housing market is rebounding, including here in Florida. Our high school graduation rate is the highest on record. [*Applause*] Absolutely. More young people are earning college degrees than ever before.

So even as we are digging ourselves out of the economic hole that we were in back in 2008, we've also worked to lay a new foundation for America's future growth. Now, here's the problem though. There are a bunch of good things happening, the economy is starting to grow, but some of the trends that have really battered middle class families and people who are working hard to get into the middle class for decades, those have not yet gotten better. Folks at the top are doing better than ever, but over the past 4 years, average wages have barely budged. So you've got too many Americans who are working harder than ever just to keep up.

And it's our job to reverse those trends. We've got to build an economy that works for everybody, not just for a few. We've got to restore opportunity for all people, the basic idea that no matter where you started, no matter what you look like, if you work hard, you can get ahead. America has got to be a place where, if you're responsible and you apply yourself, you can make it.

So what we've focused on is an opportunity agenda that has four parts. Part one is more

good jobs that pay good wages, whether it's in manufacturing, in energy, in innovation and technology, in the service industries. And one of the things we've done in Orlando is focus on growing tourism. And Buddy knows this. Two years ago, I came here to announce an Executive order to track more foreign tourists to the United States, and last year spending by foreign tourists was up almost 10 percent. That is a huge boost to Florida. We've got to keep on taking those kinds of steps.

Part two of our opportunity agenda: We've got to train more Americans with the skills that they need to fill the jobs that are actually out there, not just today, but also tomorrow.

Part three you know something about: We've got to make sure every young person has access to a world-class education, from high-quality preschool for every 4-year-old to an affordable college education for all you striving young people.

And part four is making sure that our economy rewards the hard work of every American with wages that you can live on, savings you can retire on, health care that's there when you need it.

And in pursuit of this opportunity agenda, I'm going to work with Congress wherever I can. But Congress doesn't always—[*laughter*]—move the way we'd like, and so we're calling this a year of action. Wherever I see a chance to go ahead and expand opportunity for more Americans, I'm going to take it. I'm not going to wait for Congress. We've just got to go ahead and get it done.

I'll give you a couple of examples. In the past few weeks, I've used my executive authority to require Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour to make sure that folks, if they're working full time, aren't living in poverty. I've signed another Executive order to make sure that they're actually paid the overtime that they've earned, because everybody who works hard deserves that chance to get ahead. And if you work more, you should get paid a little more.

As part of making sure our economy rewards the hard work of every American, I'm also coming here today to make sure that our economy rewards the hard work of women. Now, I just want to be clear, I've got nothing against you men. [*Laughter*] We're working hard to make sure that you're doing the right thing too and that you're getting opportunity as well. But I've got a personal stake in seeing women get ahead.

First of all, women make up 80 percent of my household—[*laughter*]—if you count my mother-in-law. And I always count my mother-in-law. [*Laughter*] But I also personally know the challenges that women face in our economy, and there are some particular challenges that women face. I grew up the son of a single mom who struggled to put herself through school and make ends meet and raise my sister and me the right way. And she couldn't have done it if it weren't for my grandparents. And the most important breadwinner in my family was my grandmother, who worked her way up from being a secretary to being a vice president of a bank—never got a college degree—but then hit a glass ceiling at that local bank where she worked. So she'd train men to eventually be her boss, even though she knew a lot more than they did.

When Michelle and I had our girls, we gave everything we had to try to balance raising a family and chasing careers. But I'll be honest with you, it was harder for her than it was for me. Because when she was with the girls, she'd feel guilty about, am I doing everything I need to be doing on the job. When she was at work, she'd feel bad about, are the girls missing me, and I know Barack is messing up somehow. [*Laughter*] So she's calling to check.

And so today, obviously, we're lucky, and Michelle and I usually get to have dinner with the girls every night, and they're doing great. And the highlight of every day for me is sitting with them at the dinner table. And I want to make sure my daughters are getting the same chances as men. I don't want them paid less for doing the same job as some guy is doing. When they have children, I want to make sure that they're not having to quit their jobs or in some other fashion be hampered because we don't have the kinds of policies in this country that support them.

My point is—and I'm saying now to the men—we've all got a stake in this. Women make up about half of our workforce. Over half of Valencia's students, 56 percent, are women. In fact, for more than two decades, women have earned over half of the higher education degrees awarded in this country. So that means soon, for the first time, America's highly educated workforce will be made up of more women than men.

But the thing is, our economy hasn't caught up to that reality yet. So we've got too many women who work hard to support themselves and their families, including the 20 percent of women enrolled in college who are trying to raise kids while earning a degree, and they're facing unfair choices or outdated workplace policies that are holding them back. That has to change, because it holds all of us back.

When women make less than men, that hurts their families, including their partners, their husbands, their kids. They've got less to get by on. It hurts businesses because now they—their customers have less to spend. When a job doesn't offer adequate family leave to care for a new baby or an ailing parent, that burdens men and children. When any of our citizens can't fulfill their potential for any reason that doesn't have to do with their talent or their character or their work ethic, well, that's holding us back. We do better when everybody participates, when everybody's talents are put to use, everybody has a fair shot.

And I had a wonderful conversation before I came out here with Carolyn, and we had a group of other women, including Dr. Williams, and you should just have heard these stories. I mean, I don't know if Dr. Williams has shared her story, but her mom was blind and raised her, a single mom. And she had to go to school and get a job, and when her child was born prematurely, her blind mother comes down to provide childcare because that's the only way you could manage it.

You had another young woman describing what it's like when you've got two—you've got twins, preemie babies, and she's having to quit her job because there's no childcare available, and how she needed WIC and other programs to support her even though she had a loving husband who was helping out.

So this is a family agenda. But it starts with making sure every woman is getting a fair shot. It's time for a woman's economic agenda that grows our economy for everybody. Now, that begins with making sure women receive equal pay for equal work. This is a really simple principle. This should not be confusing. [*Laughter*] It's not that complicated.

Today, more women are their family's main breadwinner than ever before. But on average, women are still earning just 77 cents on every dollar that a man does. Women with college degrees may earn hundreds of thousands of dollars less over the course of her career than a man at the same educational level. And that's wrong. This isn't 1958, it's 2014. That's why the first bill I signed into law was called the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, and it made sure that it was easier for women to sue if they weren't being paid the same as men.

And in the coming weeks, Congress will have a chance to go even further by voting yes or no on what's called the Paycheck Fairness Act. Right now a majority of the Senators support that bill, but so far, Republicans have blocked it. We've got to get them to change their minds and join us in this century—[*laughter*]—because a woman deserves equal pay for equal work. It's pretty straightforward.

And Congress should not stop there. A woman deserves workplace policies that protect her right to have a baby without losing her job. It's pretty clear that if men were having babies—[*laughter*]—we'd have different policies. Right? I mean, we know that; that's for certain. A woman deserves to take a day off to care for a sick child or a parent without running into hardship.

So Congress needs to act so that Americans join every other advanced nation on Earth by offering paid leave to folks who work hard every day. It's time to do away with some of these workplace policies that belong in a "Mad Men" episode. [*Laughter*] We've got to make sure that every woman has the opportunities that she deserves, because when women succeed, America succeeds. I truly believe that.

And on the ride over here, we were talking about some of the best practices of companies that are highly successful. It turns out that if you give families—you give your workers some flexibility so that if they've got a sick child or a sick parent, they can have a little time off, that those employees are more productive, the companies do better, you have less turnover. So it's good business practice. It's the right thing to do.

At a time when women hold the majority of low-wage jobs, Congress is going to get a chance to vote yes or no on whether millions of women who work hard all day deserve a raise. There's a bill before Congress that would raise the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. That would lift wages for nearly 28 million Americans across the country. And again, it would be good for business. Because what happens is more customers have more money to spend. It will grow the economy for everybody. It's time for Congress to join the rest of the country. It's time for—we're calling it the 10–10 campaign. Give America a raise. And that, in particular, will help the disproportionate number of women who are in lower wage jobs.

And on each of these issues, Members of Congress will have to choose between helping women and families get ahead or holding them back. Part of our challenge is fewer than 20 [percent of]* seats in Congress are held by women. I think we're all clear that Congress would get more done if you kind of evened that out a little bit. I'm pretty confident about that.

But in the meantime, we're going to keep making the case as to why these policies are the right ones for working families and for businesses. So over the next few months, my administration is going to host a series of roundtable discussions like the one I had in different parts of the country just to hear stories about issues like workplace flexibility and opening up new leadership opportunities for women. And it's all going to lead up to the first-ever White House Summit on Working Families that we're going to be holding this summer. And maybe some of you will participate, because we want to hear your stories.

Now, let me close by mentioning one last policy that's benefiting millions of women right now, and that is the Affordable Care Act. I know there's a lot of politics around it. I know there are a lot of TV ads around that don't always accurately reflect what's going on. But right now, despite the fact that the website was really bad for the first month—[*laughter*]—it's now fixed—more than 5 million Americans have signed up for plans at healthcare.gov. More than 5 million. More than 3 million young people have gained coverage because this law lets you stay on your parent's plan until you turn 26. So I'll bet there are some young people right now who have health insurance in this auditorium because of the law.

And thanks to this law, no American—zero—can ever again be denied health insurance because of a preexisting condition. Not to mention, no woman can ever again be charged more for just being a woman.

Now, this is something that people don't realize. Before we passed Obamacare, it was routine for insurance companies to charge women significantly more than men for health insurance. It's just like the drycleaners. [*Laughter*] You send in a blouse, I send in a shirt, they charge you twice as much. [*Laughter*] But the same thing was happening in health insurance. And so we've banned that policy for everybody, not just folks who were getting health insurance on the exchange. But if you were getting health insurance on the job, they can't discriminate against women in that same fashion. Not to mention tens of millions of women have gained access to free preventive care like mammograms and contraceptive care. The point is, no woman should have to put off the potentially lifesaving care she needs just because money is tight.

And in the roundtable I just had, there were at least three, four folks in that roundtable—the majority of the women I just talked to—had an instance in their lives where either because of a sick child or a premature baby or an ailing

* White House correction.

parent, they would be bankrupt had they not had health insurance. Broke. So when you hear folks talking about Obamacare and I'm not using it because I've got health insurance or I'm healthy, well, yes, you don't need health insurance until you need health insurance. [*Laughter*] It seems like a drag until you actually confront what life does to all of us at some point. Some unexpected thing happens, and you want to make sure that you've got that support.

Now, none of that has stopped Republicans from Congress from spending the last few years not focused on legislation to create jobs or raise wages or help more young people afford college. They've taken 50 votes to try to repeal or undermine this law—50. You know what they say, the 50th time is the charm. [*Laughter*] Fifty times. And it's not just to try to improve the law or here's a particular problem. No, we just want to scrap it so that millions of people who now have health insurance, we want them to go back to not having health insurance.

Well, that's not going to happen. They can keep wasting their time repealing—trying to repeal the ACA; we're going to keep working to make this law work better because every person and every woman deserves to control her own health care choices, not her boss, not her insurer, surely not Congress.

So there's an important deadline coming up, by the way. This is now the last call for 2014. If you've been thinking about buying one of the new plans on healthcare.gov—and a large proportion of people, the majority, in fact, may be able to buy health insurance for as little as a hundred bucks or less a month, less than your cable or your cell phone bill. I saw everybody had a cell phone. [*Laughter*] But the deadline to get covered this year is March 31, which is just 11 days away. So if you are uninsured, check out your new choices at healthcare.gov. Many of you will be able to get covered for a hundred dollars a month or less. If you're already covered, then help get a friend covered, because that's part of what America is about: taking responsibility for working to achieve our own dreams; also coming together to help our fellow citizens pursue and secure their own dreams as well.

There are just such amazing stories of the women that I talked with before I came out here. Every one of them, at some point, had made a major sacrifice on behalf of their families. One woman had a severely autistic son, took 12 years off to raise her three kids, including this son, before now going back to school and being able to teach once again. Just like my mom. Just like my grandma. I didn't fully appreciate at the time the sacrifice they were making. I was talking about how I used to complain to my mom when she was going to school and working, why are we eating the same thing every night? [*Laughter*] Because she was doing so much and then coming home and still taking the time to make sure that I had a decent meal.

That's what built this country, those kinds of sacrifices. And we've got to make sure that we as a country are helping people who are so courageous and so brave and working so hard, all those moms and grandmas and young women like Carolyn who are trying to start their own businesses.

We've come a long way together over these past 5 years, but we've got to do more to restore opportunity for everybody. Whether you're a man or a woman, whether you are Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, with or without a disability, all of us have something to offer. All of us have a place in this American story. And as long as I have the privilege of being President, I'm going to keep working to make sure every single one of us have a chance to succeed. Or as you say here at Valencia, "We Say You Can."

Thank you, everybody. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in Room 8–11 A–D of the Special Events Center. In his remarks, he referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson and sister Maya Soetoro-Ng; Carolyn Verno, student, Valencia College, who introduced the President; Lynn Desjarlais, career program adviser, Valencia College; and Orlando, FL, resident Eve Gassman. He also referred to the memorandum of March 13 on updating and modernizing overtime regulations, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Videotaped Remarks on the Observance of Nowruz
March 20, 2014

Dorood. As you and your families gather around the Nowruz table, I want to extend my best wishes on this new spring and new year. As always, this holiday is a chance to give gratitude for your blessings and to reflect on our hopes for the year ahead.

As I have every year as President, I want to take this opportunity to speak directly to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since taking office, I've offered the Iranian Government an opportunity: If it meets its international obligations, then there could be a new relationship between our two countries, and Iran could begin to return to its rightful place among the community of nations.

Last year, you, the Iranian people, made your voice heard when you elected Dr. Hassan Rouhani as your new President. During his campaign, he pledged to strengthen Iran's economy, improve the lives of the Iranian people, and engage constructively with the international community, and he was elected with your strong support.

Last fall, I spoke with President Rouhani. It was the first conversation between an American President and an Iranian leader since 1979. I conveyed to President Rouhani my deep respect for the Iranian people, just as he expressed his respect for the American people. And I told him that I firmly believe that we can address the serious disagreements between our governments, reduce distrust, and begin to move beyond our difficult history.

Since then, we've made progress. For years, the international community has had concerns that Iran's nuclear program could lead to Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon, which would be a threat to the region and to the world. Under the initial agreement we reached in November, the Iranian Government has agreed to limit key parts of its nuclear program. Along with our international partners, the United States is giving Iran some relief from sanctions. Now we're engaged in intensive negotiations in the hopes of finding a comprehensive solution that resolves the world's concerns with the Iranian nuclear program.

As I've said before, I'm under no illusions. This will be difficult. But I'm committed to diplomacy because I believe there is the basis for a practical solution. Iran's highest officials, including Supreme Leader Khamenei, have said that Iran is not developing nuclear weapons. So there is a chance to reach an agreement if Iran takes meaningful and verifiable steps to assure the world that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only. Iran would have access to peaceful nuclear energy. And we will have addressed—peacefully, with diplomacy—one of the greatest challenges to international peace and security.

A comprehensive agreement on the nuclear issue—and an Iran that upholds universal rights at home and abroad—would help move Iran along the new path that so many Iranians seek. After all, throughout your history, the talents and genius of the Iranian people have led to great achievements in literature and the arts, science and technology. But the economic hardship that so many Iranians have endured in recent years—because of the choices of Iranian leaders—has deprived your country and the world of the extraordinary skills and contributions you have to offer. And you deserve better.

If Iran meets its international obligations, we know where the path of dialogue and greater trust and cooperation can lead. It will mean more opportunities for Iranians to trade and forge ties with the rest of the world. It means more economic growth and jobs for Iranians, especially young Iranians who dream of making their mark in the world. It will mean more opportunities for Iranian students to travel abroad and build new partnerships that help you realize your incredible potential. In short, real diplomatic progress this year can help open up new possibilities and prosperity for the Iranian people for years to come.

That's the message the Iranian people sent at the ballot box last year. I hope that

the entire Iranian Government hears that message too. Because for the first time in many years, we have the opportunity to start down a new path. And if Iran seizes this moment, this Nowruz could mark not just the beginning of a new year, but a new chapter in the history of Iran and its role in the world, including a better relationship with the United States and the American people, rooted in mutual interest and mutual respect.

Thank you, and *Eid-eh Shoma Mobarak.*

NOTE: The remarks were recorded at approximately 4:05 p.m. on March 14 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in Miami, Florida
March 20, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Now, first of all, I think it's clear that Tracy's introduction was much better than Alonzo's. Now, the truth is, I was a big fan of Alonzo's before I had a chance to meet him, and that's despite being a Bulls fan. And the reason is, is because he had a warrior's heart and he always fought for what he believed in and he was always a team player. And having gotten to know Alonzo and Tracy and the kids and Tracy's mom, I've just grown to love them even more. And not only is the Heat lucky, but all of South Florida is lucky to have them in their community and doing such great work. So we really appreciate them. They're great friends.

I've got some other people I love that I just want to mention real quick, and that is, first and foremost, the leader of the Democrats in the House of Representatives, I believe will go down in history as one of the greatest Speakers in our history, which is one of the reason I want to get her back there—but she is as tough and principled and as visionary as any Member of Congress that we've ever seen, and I'm grateful to call her a friend—Nancy Pelosi. Give Nancy a big round of applause.

We've got some outstanding members of the congressional delegation from Florida here. Representative Corinne Brown is here. Representative Ted Deutch is here. Representative Lois Frankel is here. Representative Joe Garcia is here. And that's Joe Garcia's dad. And our chairwoman at the DNC, who is doing a great job, Debbie Wasserman Schultz is here. Love Debbie. And of course, all of you are here.

Tracy told a story—with a few embellishments from her mom—[*laughter*]—that in some ways captures better than anything I could say what America is about and what the Democratic Party has to be about. This afternoon I was up in Orlando. We went to Valencia College. It's one of the best community colleges in the country. And I met with a group of women; all of them had a story to tell about overcoming in some ways. This is part of a process that Nancy and the White House and others are launching across the country, having a conversation just about women and families and how do we make sure that folks who work hard and are taking responsibility for themselves and have dreams about something better for their kids, how do we make sure that that hard work pays off. So this is all going to be culminating in a White House Summit on Working Families in June. And so we're having these roundtable discussions in various parts of the country.

One of the women I met with is now the president of the college, this local college. She was raised by a mother who is blind—single mom, blind, in poverty, raises her daughter to become the president of the community college. And the president of the community college was explaining—African American woman—she was explaining how when she had her son, he was born prematurely, she had to take leave, and when she was ready to go back to work, she couldn't afford childcare. Her mom

moved in with her, so her blind mother didn't just raise her, but now is providing childcare for her as she is going on to get her education and advance until she ended up having a doctorate in education.

Another woman there had a severely autistic son. She was an engineer by training, had to take 12 years off to help raise her son, then needed to go back to work, went back to school, is now teaching mathematics. Another young woman who was there had premature twins, lost her job because there was no way that she could afford the childcare required, for a time was on food stamps, went back to work, is now successfully pursuing a career in education.

Every single story you heard were of these remarkable women who were putting everything they had into their families and their children, and they're working. And they were telling stories that I remember from when my single mom was raising me. We joked about how when I was 10 years old, I complained to my mom, "Why is it we eat the same thing every three—there are three meals we eat every day?" And she had to take me aside when I was, like, 10 years old and say: "Let me explain something to you. I'm working, I'm going to school. This is the only thing I've got time to cook right now." And when I told that story, these women, they said, "Can I tell my son that you said that?" [*Laughter*] Because apparently, they were having the exact same conversation.

The point is that so many of us here who, as Tracy said, have experienced incredible blessings, we experience those things because previous generations have poured that same effort and blood and sweat and tears and had the same kinds of dreams for us. And as a consequence, in this country, we have made it. But it's also been because we had a society and a government that at critical junctures said, you know what, let's give you a hand up. You're making an effort, let's give you a scholarship to go to school. You had an illness in your family, we're going to make sure that there's a net beneath you so you can get back on your feet. You're a child who's born into poverty, it doesn't matter; we're going to make sure that the public school can deliver a good education for you.

And it's because of that collective effort that we've made that this country that started off with a few colonies ended up being the greatest, most powerful, wealthiest nation in the history of the world. And what we now fight for is making sure that that same value, those same visions are there for the next generation and the generation after that and the generation after that.

And Tracy is exactly right. Those of us who have been blessed by this country have an obligation to make sure that that vision continues. And ultimately, that's what our politics has to be about. I've run my last race. But when I think back to the very first race I ran, and I think back about what I do today, there's a running thread, and it's exactly what Tracy and her mom represent, and that is this sense that regardless of what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is, what faith you are, that you can make it. And we've got to make sure we don't lose that.

And when I came into office and Nancy was the Speaker, we were facing the worst crisis since the Great Depression, and our top priority was making sure that we stopped the bleeding and we started the economy growing again. And we've done that. The economy is now growing. For 4 consecutive years, we've now seen 8.7 million jobs created. Energy is booming. Clean energy has doubled. The auto industry is roaring. Housing has recovered, including here in Florida.

So we've got more things going for us economically than any other country on Earth. And it's fascinating when I talk to foreign leaders and they say, boy, you guys have it so good. We had the French leader here; he was bragging about, we're trying to adopt policies so we can grow like you. But that's not how it feels to a lot of folks who are cleaning houses. That's not how it feels to a lot of folks who are working in a fast food establishment. That's not how it's feeling to a lot of middle class families right now, because even though the economy is growing again, incomes, wages, they're flat. And people are having a hard time getting trac-

tion and feeling confident that their children in fact are going to do better than they are.

So everything we're fighting for now is designed to make sure that not just the economy is growing, not only are we investing in research and development and staying on the cutting edge when it comes to technology, and not only are we developing traditional sources of energy and clean energy and becoming more energy efficient, not only are we doing all the things required to become more competitive, but we're also paying attention to middle class families and working families and women like Tracy's mom and making sure that they are getting a fair shake, which means raising the minimum wage. It means making sure that there's equal pay for equal work.

It means policies to provide families the flexibility and women the flexibility where if a child gets sick, if somebody like Alijah gets sick, that that mom can go home and take care of that child without losing her job or having her pay docked so that at the end of the month she can't pay the bills. It means making sure that we've got early childhood education so that the word gap that kids experience—poor kids hearing 30 million fewer words than our kids by the time they get to school—closing that gap. Making sure that third graders are literate. Making sure that our high schools are actually training kids with the skills they need to go further. Those are all the things that we're fighting for.

Now, unfortunately, we've got on the other side folks who have a different vision of America. They're no less patriotic. They love their families just as much. Many of them do wonderful things in their communities. But their basic vision is that we don't have an obligation, at least through our government, to help; everybody has got to just look out for themselves or the community that you've built in your church or synagogue or your block or your family. We don't have to worry about that kid on the other side of town. We don't have to worry about that woman who is cleaning our house, which is why every initiative we put forward they say no to.

And that's what not just this election, but the next five elections are going to be about. Now, the good news is, on every individual issue, America is on our side. You take a poll of whether or not it's a good thing to invest in early childhood education, everybody says yes. Take a poll and you ask, does it make sense for us to raise the minimum wage? The majority of people say yes; a majority of Republicans say yes. Take a poll, should we have immigration reform to make sure that folks who are part of our communities, whose kids are in our schools alongside ours, who are making incredible contributions, should they have a chance to get out of the shadows and make sure that they can live out their dreams, the majority say yes.

So the problem is not that the American people disagree with us on the issues. The challenge is, is that our politics in Washington have become so toxic that people just lose faith and finally they just say, you know what, I'm not interested, I'm not going to bother, I'm not going to vote.

And that's especially true during the midterms. During Presidential elections, young people vote, women are more likely to vote, Blacks, Hispanics more likely to vote. And suddenly a more representative cross-section of America gets out there and we do pretty well in Presidential elections. But in midterms we get clobbered, either because we don't think it's important or we've become so discouraged about what's happening in Washington that we think it's not worth our while.

And the reason today is so important and the reason that I'm so appreciative for all you being here is because we're going to have to get over that. This is a top priority. We need Nancy Pelosi as Speaker because folks like Nana over there, cleaning houses, may need her help, and she's going to look out for her. We need Harry Reid staying as Democratic Leader in the Senate because there are kids just like Alijah, but who aren't as lucky to have parents with the resources that Alonzo and Tracy have. Just a mile away from here, they look just like him, just as much talent, but they don't have the resources, and they need somebody who is going to be fighting for them.

And the good news is, when we actually make these investments in kids like Alijah, when we're looking out for women like Tracy's mom, we all do better. Businesses have more customers, the country hums, people's attitudes are better, consumer confidence is up. That's how America has always grown.

So that's what's at stake. And I'm just hoping that all of you feel the same sense of urgency that I do. Like I said, I'm not on the ballot this time, but I didn't get into politics just for the office. I got into it because I believe in what we're fighting for. But I can't do it alone. Nancy can't do it alone. Debbie can't do it alone. We're going to need you. And I'm grateful you're here for that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. at the residence of Tracy and Alonzo H. Mourning. In his remarks, he referred to Alijah H. Mourning, Alonzo Mourning III, and Myka Sydney Mourning, children of Mr. and Mrs. Mourning; Jean "Nana" Wilson, mother of Mrs. Mourning; José Garcia, Sr., father of Rep. Joe Garcia; Felecia Williams, president, Valencia College, West Campus; Orlando, FL, resident Eve Gassman; and President François Hollande of France. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address
March 22, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, I visited a community college in Florida, where I spoke with students about what we need to do to make sure our economy rewards the hard work of every American. More specifically, I spoke about making sure our economy rewards the hard work of women.

Today, women make up about half of our workforce and more than half of our college graduates. More women are now their family's main breadwinner than ever before.

But in a lot of ways, our economy hasn't caught up to this new reality yet. On average, a woman still earns just 77 cents for every dollar a man does. And too many women face outdated workplace policies that hold them back, which in turn holds back our families and our entire economy.

A woman deserves to earn equal pay for equal work and paid leave that lets you take a day off to care for a sick child or parent. Congress needs to act on these priorities.

And when women hold most lower wage jobs in America, Congress needs to raise the minimum wage. Because no woman who works full time should ever have to raise her children in poverty.

Now, the good news is that in the year since I first called on Congress to raise the minimum wage, six States have passed laws to raise theirs. More States, counties, and cities are working to raise their minimum wages as we speak. Small businesses like St. Louis-based Pi Pizzeria are raising their wages too, not out of charity, but because it's good for business. And Pi, by the way, makes a really good pizza. In this year of action, I've signed an Executive order requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour.

But if we're truly going to reward the hard work of every American, Congress needs to join the rest of the country and pass a bill that would lift the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. This wouldn't just raise wages for minimum wage workers, its effects would lift wages for nearly 28 million Americans across this country. It will give businesses more customers with more money to spend and grow the economy for everybody. So call up your Member of Congress and let them know it's time for "10–10." It's time to give America a raise.

A true opportunity agenda is one that works for working women. Because when women succeed, America succeeds. We do better when everyone participates and when everyone who works hard has the chance to get ahead. That's what opportuni-

ty means, and it's why I'll keep fighting to restore it.

Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2 p.m. on March 21 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on March 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 21, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on March 22.

Statement on the Fourth Anniversary of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
March 23, 2014

Since I signed the Affordable Care Act into law, the share of Americans with insurance is up, and the growth of health care costs is down to its slowest rate in 50 years, two of the most promising developments for our middle class and our fiscal future in a long time.

More Americans with insurance have gained new benefits and protections: the 100 million Americans who've gained the right to free preventive care like mammograms and contraception, the 8 million seniors who've saved thousands of dollars on their prescription drugs, and the untold number of families who won't be driven into bankruptcy by out-of-pocket costs because this law prevents insurers from placing dollar limits on the care you can receive.

More Americans without insurance have gained coverage. Over the past 4 years, over 3 million young Americans have been able to stay on their family plans. And over the past 5½ months alone, more than 5 million Americans have signed up to buy private health insurance plans on healthcare.gov, plans that can no longer discriminate against preexisting conditions or charge you more just because you're a woman or a cancer survivor. And millions more have enrolled in Medicaid.

It is these numbers, and the stories behind each one of them, that will ultimately determine the fate of this law. It is the measurable outcomes—in savings for families and businesses, healthier kids with better performance in schools, seniors with more money to spend because they're paying less for their medicine, and young entrepreneurs who'll have the freedom to try new jobs or chase that new idea—that will ultimately offer more security and peace of mind to more Americans who work hard to get ahead.

Last month, after her first wellness visit under her new insurance plan, a woman from Colorado shared with me what that peace of mind meant to her. "After using my new insurance for the first time, you probably heard my sigh of relief from the White House," she wrote. "I felt like a human being again. I felt that I had value."

This is what's at stake anytime anyone, out of some outdated obsession, pledges to repeal or undermine the Affordable Care Act. And that's why my administration will spend the fifth year of this law and beyond working to implement and improve on it.

If you're an American who wants to get covered—or if you know someone who should—it's now last call for 2014. March 31 is the deadline to get covered this year. So check out healthcare.gov or call 1–800–318–2596 to see what new choices are available to you, and get covered today.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands in Amsterdam, Netherlands
March 24, 2014

Prime Minister Rutte. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Netherlands. Welcome to Amsterdam. And, Barack, welcome to this very special location.

We are standing here on historic ground, surrounded by the finest paintings that Holland has produced and only a stone's throw away from the house of John Adams, the first American Ambassador to the Netherlands and second President of United States. It's a location that symbolizes the enduring partnership between the U.S. and the Netherlands. Our shared history and heritage go back a long way.

As a historian, it was a special moment for me when earlier this morning, I was able to show President Obama two original documents from our National Archives that played an important role in the age-old friendship between our two countries. The first was our own Declaration of Independence, the Plakkaat van Verlatinghe of 1581, which inspired Thomas Jefferson and his peers. The second was the American-Dutch Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1782, another remarkable document from an age when peace between countries was usually a hard-fought affair. And today, friendship is still at the heart of the relationship between the United States and the Netherlands, along with trade, shared values, and joint responsibilities.

Since that first treaty, we have worked together in the growing awareness that economic prosperity, a safe and stable world, and international cooperation go hand in hand. With this in mind, the President and I talked about a wide range of subjects, starting with joint climate initiatives and the new steps we will take today in that regard. The Netherlands is joining with United States and a group of other countries in a bid to stop international public funding of new coal-fired power plants, for example, by multilateral development banks. We want to achieve an international level playing field to ensure that private and public parties invest in green growth wherever possible.

We also discussed the important topic of the Transatlantic and Investment Partnership Agreement between the EU and the U.S. Once concluded, this agreement will create more economic growth and jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. Importantly, it will set new standards that will benefit global trade and third countries as well. This partnership will bolster our excellent bilateral economic ties even further.

During our conversation, I stressed how much we value this partnership. The Netherlands is the world's third largest investor in the United States, and we are home to some 1,800 American businesses.

And of course, we also spoke about a major international security issues in Syria, Iran, and Ukraine. Concerning the last, we both regard Russia's attempt to annex the Crimea as a flagrant breach of international law, and we condemn its actions in the strongest possible terms. The presence of so many world leaders in the Netherlands this week presents an important opportunity for the international community to discuss this subject, as well as other pressing issues that affect our common interests.

Finally, we looked ahead at the Nuclear Security Summit today and tomorrow. President Obama deserves all the credit for getting this topic high on the agenda. In 2010, Washington hosted the first summit on this theme. In 2012, it was Seoul's turn. And now the Netherlands is proud to host the summit today and tomorrow in The Hague that will bring us closer to the goal of securing potentially dangerous nuclear material.

Barack, your presence underlines the importance of the summit, and this event, too, demonstrates the strength of the bilateral ties between our countries and of our joint commitment to peace, security, and democracy. I'm delighted to be able to reaffirm that publicly here at this splendid location.

Again, thank you for coming.

President Obama. Well, Mark, thank you. And it is a splendid location. I'm so grateful for your kind words. We were very pleased to welcome you back in 2011 to the White House, and I appreciate your warm welcome today. This is my first visit to Amsterdam and to The Hague and to the Netherlands, and I'm so pleased that I've had a chance already to meet some wonderful students. I want to thank the mayor and the curator for their hospitality as well. I'm proud to be here with some of the Dutch masters who I studied in school and to

see just the extraordinary traditions of this great country.

I'd be remiss if I did not mention that I'm proud of both of our teams at the Olympics. So in addition to painting, you really know how to speed skate. [*Laughter*]

As the Prime Minister said, we just had an excellent opportunity to experience the museum and to see those documents, including the Treaty of Friendship that John Adams negotiated more than 200 years ago, as a reminder of the historic ties between our countries. And this is—of all the press conferences I've done, this is easily the most impressive backdrop that I've had to a press conference.

Of course, we're here for our third Nuclear Security Summit. And I want to thank His Majesty King Willem-Alexander, as well as Mark, the people of Netherlands, for all the preparations that go into bringing together so many heads of state. This is just one more example of Dutch leadership, not just on nuclear security, but on many global challenges.

As you know, the Netherlands is one of our closest allies, and our cooperation underscores a larger point: Our NATO allies are our closest partners on the world stage. Europe is the cornerstone of America's engagement with the world. And today we focused on several priorities, in Europe and beyond.

First, we obviously spent a considerable amount of time on the situation in Ukraine. Europe and America are united in our support of the Ukrainian Government and the Ukrainian people. We're united in imposing a cost on Russia for its actions so far. Prime Minister Rutte rightly pointed out yesterday that growing sanctions would bring significant consequences to the Russian economy. And I'll be meeting with my fellow G–7 leaders later today, and we'll continue to coordinate closely with the Netherlands and our European partners as we go forward.

Second, I thanked the Prime Minister for the Netherlands' strong commitment and contributions to NATO. Dutch forces have served with distinction in Afghanistan and joined us in confronting piracy off the Horn of Africa. Through NATO, the Netherlands contributed to the deployment of Patriot air batteries in Turkey and are making important investments in NATO defense capabilities. Dutch forces are also making critical contributions to the international stabilization mission in Mali. So, across the board, the Dutch are making their presence felt in a very positive way, and we're very grateful for that.

Third, we discussed how we can keep expanding the trade that creates jobs for our people. We're already among each other's largest trade and investment partners, but we can always do more. And so I appreciated the Netherlands' strong support for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or T–TIP, which can fuel growth both in the United States and in Europe, especially for our small and medium-sized companies.

Fourth, we discussed a range of global challenges. As the—and as the United States and the P5-plus-1 partners continue negotiations with Iran, we have the basis for a practical solution that resolves concerns over Iran's nuclear program. But at the same time, I think it's important that everyone remember, during these negotiations, we'll continue to enforce the overall sanctions architecture that helped bring Iran to the table in the first place.

I also wanted to commend the Netherlands for its leadership in the international effort to destroy Syria's chemical weapons, and that includes your role as the host of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. And more broadly, our two countries are going to keep working together to deliver humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people.

And, finally, we reaffirmed our shared determination to confront climate change and its effects, including rising sea levels, which obviously is something that the Netherlands is concerned about, given your experience with seas and tides. We're pleased that the Netherlands has joined our initiative that will virtually end all public financing for coal-fired plants abroad. It's concrete action like this that can keep making progress on reducing emissions while we develop new global agreements on climate change.

So final note: When John Adams was negotiating the treaty that we saw earlier, he wrote that the Dutch have—and I'm quoting here—have always "distinguished themselves by an inviolable attachment to freedom and the rights of nations." That was true then; it remains true today.

So, Mark, I want to thank you and the Dutch people for your hospitality, for your organization, for your partnership, and for your leadership on the world stage. And I want to thank you for sharing these extraordinary paintings with me this morning. *Dank u wel.*

Prime Minister Rutte. Very good.

President Obama. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:49 a.m. in the Gallery of Honor at the Rijksmuseum. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Eberhard van der Laan of Amsterdam; and Wim Pijbes, general director, Rijksmuseum.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Xi Jinping of China in The Hague, Netherlands
March 24, 2014

President Obama. Well, I'm very much looking forward to having another discussion with President Xi and his delegation. This happens to be the 35th anniversary of the reestablishment of formal relations between our two countries, and I think that we have made incredible strides over these past several decades, and I know that President Xi and I are both committed to continuing to strengthen and build a new model of relations between our countries.

I want to, first of all, thank the President and the First Lady of China for being such gracious hosts when Michelle, Malia, and Sasha first arrived in China. And they're still there. They've seen the Great Wall; they've seen the Terracotta Warriors. And from my phone calls with them, they're having an extraordinary time. So I want to thank the President for his outstanding hospitality towards my family.

And Michelle had an opportunity to meet with a number of young people in China, and these kinds of person-to-person ties are extremely important. And she also played some table tennis, although I think this was not the high-level Ping-Pong diplomacy that we saw in the past. [*Laughter*]

Today, in addition to the important work that we're going to be doing at the Nuclear Security Summit, we'll have the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues that are of mutual interest, including the denuclearization of North Korea, situations surrounding climate change, as well as world issues like the situation in Ukraine.

And because of the numerous meetings and fora that we've been able to establish, we're able not only to work on those issues of mutual interest and concern, but we're also able to work through frictions that exist in our relations around issues like human rights or dealing with maritime issues in the South China Sea and in the Pacific region in a way that's constructive and, hopefully, will lead to resolutions and improved solutions for all parties concerned.

We'll also have the opportunity to discuss economic issues, which are a cornerstone of our relationship, and the importance of our trading relationship and making sure that we are both abiding by the rules that allow us to create jobs and prosperity in both of our countries.

So I think it's fair to say that this bilateral relationship has been as important as any bilateral relationship in the world, and we've made great strides. I believe ultimately that by working together, China and the United States can help to strengthen international law, respect for the sovereignty of nations, and establish the kinds of rules internationally that allow all people to thrive.

And so I'm very much looking forward to this conversation and to the interaction with

President Xi during the course of this Nuclear Security Summit.

President Xi. Mr. President, it's my great pleasure to meet you again. First of all, let me thank you for calling me recently to express sympathy over the missing Malaysia Airlines flight and for instructing relevant U.S. agencies to join the search for the missing plane and to share information with the Chinese side. I want to thank you for that.

Before departing Beijing, my wife and I met your wife Michelle, your mother-in-law Mrs. Robinson, and your two lovely daughters Malia and Sasha. We had a very good conversation. I know they've finished their tour of Beijing and Xi'an and they're flying to Chengdu. I'm sure it is a trip of friendship and exchange and this trip will be remembered for them as a pleasant and memorable one. When I was bidding farewell to Michelle in Beijing, she asked me to formally convey to you her best regards. [*Laughter*]

Over the past year, you and I have stayed in close communication through meetings, phone calls, and exchange of letters. We have arrived at a series of important points of consensus and made important and positive progress in our bilateral relationship.

We are now in the 35th year of formal diplomatic relations between China and the United States. We live in a complex world, and there is greater space where China and the United States are cooperating and where we need to and can work with each other.

I have received and carefully read your recent letter to me, Mr. President. In the letter, you said that you remain committed to building the new model of major country relations with China. You also said that China-U.S. cooperation can help to advance our two countries' common interests and we can address common challenges through practical cooperation. I appreciate these statements.

I wish to emphasize that China is firmly committed to the set direction of building a new model of major country relations. We are committed to our position of no confrontation, no conflict, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation with regard to the United States. We'll adopt a more positive attitude and more vigorous actions to strengthen cooperation with the United States and also to effectively manage our differences and sensitivities and make sure the China-U.S. relationship will continue to move forward in a healthy and steady fashion.

We will soon go into our meeting; just now you mentioned some issues, which might come up in our meeting. It is like a menu and a rich one at that. I hope through this meeting, we can further deepen our communication and exchange.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:48 p.m. at the U.S. Ambassador's residence. In his remarks, he referred to Peng Liyuan, wife of President Xi. President Xi spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands on Climate Change and Financing the Transition to Low-Carbon Investments Abroad

March 24, 2014

The Netherlands and the United States share a common interest in urgent action to address global climate change. We affirm the importance of reaching a global climate change agreement in 2015 that can attract broad and ambitious participation. The agreement should reflect the continuous evolution of capabilities of countries in tackling this global challenge. It should also take account of the important role played by the private sector, sub-national actors, and civil society in finding solutions to addressing carbon pollution while improving the resilience of nations to the impacts of climate change. Our two countries pledge to continue

our cooperation towards adopting such an agreement at the United Nations climate conference in Paris in 2015.

We reaffirm our support of internationally agreed commitments to scale up the mobilization of climate finance and recognize that different forms of financing are needed to support countries making the transition to a low-emission, climate resilient economy. We strive to deploy public resources to catalyze private climate finance in and to developing countries.

We emphasize that our work to scale up climate friendly investments in developing countries is most effective when combined with reducing public incentives for high-carbon infrastructure. To this end, the Netherlands is joining the United States, the United Kingdom, and others in agreeing to end support for public financing of new coal-fired power plants abroad except in rare circumstances. This includes our bilateral development finance institutions and projects financed through the multilateral development banks, where it should be noted that the Netherlands is a member of mixed constituencies. Complementing action already taken by the United States, our two countries are working together to promote a technology-neutral standard in the OECD Export Credit Group that limits support for high carbon intensity power plants by export credit agencies.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan on Contributions to Global Minimization of Nuclear Material
March 24, 2014

Recalling the history of Japan-U.S. bilateral collaboration on advanced nuclear activities as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) conclusion that all nuclear materials in Japan stay in peaceful activities;

Recalling Japan-U.S. cooperation including through the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) which strengthened nuclear security worldwide by reducing sensitive nuclear material in Japan and other countries and securely transporting the material to the United States; and,

Recalling President Obama's remarks at Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic on April 5, 2009;

Japan and the United States reaffirm our determination to strengthen nuclear security and to further cooperate, through activities such as our bilateral Nuclear Security Working Group and the GTRI, toward our mutual goal of preventing nuclear terrorism.

Today in The Hague, the Netherlands, on the occasion of the third Nuclear Security Summit, Prime Minister Abe and President Obama pledged to remove and dispose all highly-enriched uranium (HEU) and separated plutonium from the Fast Critical Assembly (FCA) at the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) in Japan. This effort involves the elimination of hundreds of kilograms of nuclear material, furthering our mutual goal of minimizing stocks of HEU and separated plutonium worldwide, which will help prevent unauthorized actors, criminals, or terrorists from acquiring such materials. This material, once securely transported to the United States, will be sent to a secure facility and fully converted into less sensitive forms. The plutonium will be prepared for final disposition. The HEU will be downblended to low enriched uranium (LEU) and utilized for civilian purposes.

By committing to remove and dispose all HEU and separated plutonium from the FCA, Japan and the United States reaffirm our belief that the most cutting edge sciences do not necessarily require the use of the most proliferation sensitive materials. In this context, our two countries plan to work together to design new enhancements to the FCA, expanding the facility's scope to include important research on the transmutation and disposition of nuclear waste. Additionally, to ensure that Japan can

safely and securely further its important work on nuclear research and medical isotope production, the United States will continue to accept research reactor spent fuel from several Japanese facilities that utilize LEU.

This pledge complements the significant role that both Japan and the United States are playing in finding new ways to continue improving global nuclear security. Many of the remaining gains that the international community can make in this area will require difficult decisions, and Japan has demonstrated its leadership by resolving to remove all special nuclear material from the FCA, consistent with all Summit Communiqués' spirit to minimize stocks of nuclear material. Our two countries encourage others to consider what they can do to further HEU and plutonium minimization.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo of Belgium on the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit
March 24, 2014

Belgium and the United States of America are pleased to announce that they have jointly completed the removal of a significant amount of excess highly enriched uranium (HEU) and separated plutonium from Belgium.

At the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit, Belgium and the United States pledged to work together to remove this material prior to the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit. This removal entailed extremely complex operations that required the joint team to develop a new glovebox facility for plutonium packaging, to train and certify personnel in specialized packaging operations, to validate certificates for a U.S.-designed nuclear material package in Belgium, and to address materials in unique and unusual forms. Despite the significant technical challenges, the team successfully completed the operation on schedule.

The material was safely packaged in transport containers certified by regulators in both the United States and Belgium. The United States, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) worked seamlessly together and in accordance with all relevant regulations and internationally-recognized recommendations to securely transport this material to its final destination.

Belgium and the United States plan to continue their cooperation to eliminate additional stocks of excess special nuclear material, consistent with their commitment to prevent nuclear terrorism. They also pledge to work with others in the international community to assist them with the elimination of such materials.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by President Obama and President Giorgio Napolitano of Italy on the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit
March 24, 2014

Italy and the United States of America are pleased to announce that they have jointly completed the removal of approximately 20 kilograms of excess highly enriched uranium (HEU) and separated plutonium from Italy.

At the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit, Italy and the United States pledged to work together to remove this material prior to the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit. This removal entailed extremely complex operations that required the development of new gloveboxes for plutonium packaging, the development of a new process to convert HEU from a solution to an oxide, the coordination of uranium shipments from three separate locations, the development of novel packaging configurations for

the consolidation of plutonium materials within Italy, and the training and certification of personnel for specialized packaging operations.

The material was safely packaged in transport containers certified by regulators in both the United States and Italy. The United States, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) worked seamlessly together and in accordance with all relevant regulations and internationally-recognized recommendations throughout the operation to ensure the safe and secure transport of this material. Despite the significant technical challenges, the team was able to successfully complete the operation on schedule.

Italy and the United States plan to continue to work together to eliminate additional stocks of special nuclear material to make sure they do not fall into the hands of terrorists. They also pledge to work with others in the international community to assist them with the elimination of such materials.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement on Enhancing Radiological Security
March 24, 2014

This gift basket records the intent of Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States, who choose to join to secure IAEA Category 1 radioactive sources within their territory by 2016, consistent with the actions outlined below:

- We the parties to this additional statement declare our commitment to secure IAEA Category 1 sources consistent with the IAEA's *Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources* and with consideration of *Nuclear Security Series 14: Nuclear security recommendations on radioactive material and associated facilities* and *Nuclear Security Series 15: Nuclear security recommendations on nuclear and other radioactive material out of regulatory control,* giving particular attention to the following activities:
  - Support a regulatory body whose regulatory functions are effectively independent of other functions, with the authority to oversee and enforce security at sites (legislation, regulations, inspections, human resource qualifications, etc.);
  - Establish a comprehensive lifecycle management plan (import/export controls, secure storage, orphan source recovery, disused source management, national registry, etc.);
  - Develop a comprehensive plan for sources out of regulatory control (Search & Secure), notification of neighboring countries and IAEA Incident and Trafficking Database;
  - Assess the domestic threat and develop a national response plan (exercised periodically);
  - Implement site level security measures (physical protection measures, procedures, training, performance testing, maintenance, awareness, trustworthiness of individuals involved in the management of radioactive sources, etc.); and
  - Provide rapid response to any attempted or actual unauthorized access to radioactive material (exercised periodically)
- Cooperation with other States and multilateral organizations is encouraged to complete the above-listed radiological security measures.
- We also may consider instituting additional best practices for IAEA Category 1

radioactive source security. These measures could include:

- Robust physical protection access controls preferably with multifactor authentication to restrict access to radiological sources;
- Monitoring systems designed with defense in depth; for example, redundant and timely alarms and video assessment from multiple sites sent to a centralized monitoring facility staffed by trustworthy personnel;
- Enhanced delay measures to allow response forces to arrive in time to address the security threat;
- The active involvement of off-site response forces in both maintaining awareness of radiological sources and threats within the city/state/country, as well as engaging sites with radiological sources in planning and training activities (e.g., facility walk-downs, target folder development, tabletop and other exercises); and
- A robust and holistic regulatory framework that governs secure source transportation, possession, and disposition.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement—The Hague Declaration
March 24, 2014

The Hague, The Netherlands

1. We, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission met in The Hague to reaffirm our support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

2. International law prohibits the acquisition of part or all of another state's territory through coercion or force. To do so violates the principles upon which the international system is built. We condemn the illegal referendum held in Crimea in violation of Ukraine's constitution. We also strongly condemn Russia's illegal attempt to annex Crimea in contravention of international law and specific international obligations. We do not recognize either.

3. Today, we reaffirm that Russia's actions will have significant consequences. This clear violation of international law is a serious challenge to the rule of law around the world and should be a concern for all nations. In response to Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to demonstrate our determination to respond to these illegal actions, individually and collectively we have imposed a variety of sanctions against Russia and those individuals and entities responsible. We remain ready to intensify actions including coordinated sectoral sanctions that will have an increasingly significant impact on the Russian economy, if Russia continues to escalate this situation.

4. We remind Russia of its international obligations, and its responsibilities including those for the world economy. Russia has a clear choice to make. Diplomatic avenues to de-escalate the situation remain open, and we encourage the Russian Government to take them. Russia must respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, begin discussions with the Government of Ukraine, and avail itself of offers of international mediation and monitoring to address any legitimate concerns.

5. The Russian Federation's support for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine is a step in the right direction. We look forward to the mission's early deployment, in order to facilitate the dialogue on the ground, reduce tensions and promote normalization of the situation, and we call on all parties to ensure that Special Monitoring Mission

members have safe and secure access throughout Ukraine to fulfill their mandate.

6. This Group came together because of shared beliefs and shared responsibilities. Russia's actions in recent weeks are not consistent with them. Under these circumstances, we will not participate in the planned Sochi Summit. We will suspend our participation in the G–8 until Russia changes course and the environment comes back to where the G–8 is able to have a meaningful discussion and will meet again in G–7 format at the same time as planned, in June 2014, in Brussels, to discuss the broad agenda we have together. We have also advised our Foreign Ministers not to attend the April meeting in Moscow. In addition, we have decided that G–7 Energy Ministers will meet to discuss ways to strengthen our collective energy security.

7. At the same time, we stand firm in our support for the people of Ukraine who seek to restore unity, democracy, political stability, and economic prosperity to their country. We commend the Ukrainian government's ambitious reform agenda and will support its implementation as Ukraine seeks to start a new chapter in its history, grounded on a broad-based constitutional reform, free and fair presidential elections in May, promotion of human rights and respect of national minorities.

8. The International Monetary Fund has a central role leading the international effort to support Ukrainian reform, lessening Ukraine's economic vulnerabilities, and better integrating the country as a market economy in the multilateral system. We strongly support the IMF's work with the Ukrainian authorities and urge them to reach a rapid conclusion. IMF support will be critical in unlocking additional assistance from the World Bank, other international financial institutions, the EU, and bilateral sources. We remain united in our commitment to provide strong financial backing to Ukraine, to co-ordinate our technical assistance, and to provide assistance in other areas, including measures to enhance trade and strengthen energy security

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at the Closing Session of the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, Netherlands
March 25, 2014

President Obama. Well, thank you very much, Mark. Let me begin just by saying that—to Prime Minister Rutte and all the people here in the Netherlands who were involved in organizing this summit, you did an extraordinary job. And I think we would all agree that this was as well designed and well executed as any international summit that we've attended. And so we're very grateful, and you've set a high bar for the work that needs to be done in Chicago.

Two things I want to do is, is number one, just remind everybody what has been accomplished. In previous summits, as a consequence of the work that's been done collectively, 12 countries and 2 dozen nuclear facilities around the world have rid themselves entirely of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. Dozens of nations have boosted security at their nuclear storage sites, built their own countersmuggling teams, or created new centers to improve nuclear security and training. The IAEA is stronger. More countries have ratified the treaties and international partnerships at the heart of our efforts.

And at this particular summit, we've seen such steps as Belgium and Italy completing the removal of their excess supplies of highly enriched uranium and plutonium so that those supplies can be eliminated. In a major commitment, Japan announced that it will work with the United States to eliminate hundreds of kilograms of weapons-usable nuclear material from one of their experimental reactors, which would be enough for a dozen nuclear weapons. Dozens of other nations have agreed to take specific steps towards improving nuclear security in their own countries and to support global efforts.

So what's been valuable about this summit is that it has not just been talk, it's been action. And that is because of the leadership that has been shown by heads and state—of government and heads of government that have participated in this effort, as well as the extraordinary work of Foreign Ministers and sherpas and others who have helped to move this process forward.

I'm looking forward to hosting all of you in the United States in 2016. We had a good discussion this afternoon about how we should conceive of this summit 2 years from now. The consensus, based on what I heard, was that we should recognize this next summit will be a transition summit in which heads of state and government are still participating, but that we are shifting towards a more sustainable model that utilizes our ministers, our technical people, and we are building some sort of architecture that can effectively focus and implement on these issues and supplement the good work that is being done by the IAEA and others.

So I see two tasks before us over the next 2 years. Number one is, we have to set very clearly what are the actionable items that we've already identified that we know can get done if we have the political will to do them, and let's go ahead and get them done so that in 2016 we can report out that we have made extraordinary progress and achieved many of the benchmarks and targets that we had set at the very first Nuclear Security Summit. In other words, I think it is important for us not to relax, but rather, accelerate our efforts over the next 2 years, sustain momentum so that we finish strong in 2016. And I—my team will be contacting all of you to find out specific ways in which you think we can move the ball forward over the next 2 years.

The second thing we'll be doing is soliciting ideas from each of you about the ultimate architecture that should be constructed to ensure that beyond 2016 we are able to keep this process alive and effective and that we are able to sync up the efforts of the Nuclear Security Summit with existing institutions like the IAEA, Interpol, the United Nations, some of the treaties that are already in force.

All of you have important views on that, and we're going to want to make sure that you provide them so that by the time we get to 2016, we have a well-thought-out process that can be ratified at that meeting.

So I cannot thank you enough for the extraordinary efforts that all of you have already made. I cannot guarantee that the videos will be as good at the Washington conference as they have been here. We may not be as creative and imaginative as Mark and his team have been. But I promise you that we will continue to stay focused on this very important issue, and we look forward to your contributions in 2016 in the United States.

Thank you very much, Mark.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands. We can now officially hand over the chair of the NSS, sir.

President Obama. Here we go. All right.

Prime Minister Rutte. But you can see there's missing parts in all of yesterday. And now it's again missing.

President Obama. Okay. I just want to make sure this is not radioactive. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Prime Minister Rutte symbolically handed over the Nuclear Security Summit chairmanship to President Obama.*]

Prime Minister Rutte. No, no, no. It is not. [*Inaudible*] Good luck.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. at the World Forum.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands in The Hague
March 25, 2014

Prime Minister Rutte. Good afternoon. Making the world safer by preventing nuclear terrorism—that was President Obama's goal when he made nuclear security an international priority

in Prague in 2009. We have taken a big step in that direction here in The Hague. I'm proud to present our The Hague Nuclear Summit Communiqué to you today. Building on the progress we made earlier in Washington and Seoul, this communiqué sets the bar even higher. We have taken major steps towards meeting all three main objectives of the NSS process. I'll say a few words about each of them.

The first objective is to reduce the amount of dangerous nuclear material in the world. The less dangerous nuclear material there is and the better the nuclear security, the smaller the chance that terrorists will be able to get hold of it. It's that simple. That's why I am pleased that the 53 countries and 4 international organizations here have confirmed their commitment to continue reducing stocks of dangerous nuclear material: highly enriched uranium and plutonium.

A number of countries have announced their intention to hand over their highly enriched uranium to the U.S., where it will be downgraded. As chair of this summit, I naturally welcome this announcement.

We are also making progress on the second objective: improving the security of nuclear and other radioactive material. We have affirmed our ambition to improve the security of materials that can be used to make nuclear weapons and the security of radiological sources that terrorists could use to make dirty bombs.

The commitment of the NSS became more concrete in this matter. The scale of panic and fear a dirty bomb would cause doesn't bear thinking about, not to mention the possible disruption to society. So I am especially pleased that we are widening the scope of the NSS process to include this area.

Furthermore, the NSS countries have encouraged implementation of the IAEA nuclear security guidelines. A significant number of us have decided to take this commitment even further. As chair of this summit, I'm delighted to announce that two-thirds of the NSS countries, on the initiative of the United States, Korea, and the Netherlands, have pledged to incorporate these important IAEA recommendations into their national legislation. This sends a very good message and represents tangible progress. I can't stress enough how important this is. And fortunately, the group of countries supporting this initiative is growing. Our ultimate goal is, of course, for all NSS countries to follow this lead and set an example for other countries.

I'm also pleased with the growing awareness among NSS countries of the importance of nuclear forensics, because if nuclear material is misused or smuggled, it's important to be able to determine the origin of the material and trace the smugglers. The Netherlands Forensic Institute is playing a prominent role, and I expect it will produce a lot of good work in this field in the coming years.

The third main objective of the summit is to enhance international cooperation. A substantial part of the communiqué addresses this, and we are making good progress. The closing statement lays the basis for an efficient and sustainable international security architecture. For the first time, there will be a complete and coherent overview of the international nuclear security architecture with the IAEA taking the lead. There is still a lot of work to be done in this area too. I expect that we will be able to finish up the details at the summit in 2016 in the U.S.

The final point I'd like to address is the importance of improving the working relationship between government and the nuclear industry. This is an issue that is very important to the Netherlands. We need industry with us if we are to develop effective security measures that don't cause needless harm to the economy. That's why I applaud the worldwide nuclear sector for meeting the last few days in Amsterdam to discuss this subject. Cooperation is now very much on track.

I don't want to close this summit without expressing my admiration for the thousands of people who made it possible: your organizers, the security staff who made sure the summit proceeded safely and went off without a hitch, the people who managed the traffic—there are simply too many to mention. I know how hard everyone worked, and I want to thank them all

for their dedication and effort. And I want to thank the people of the Netherlands for their patience and understanding. We have seen the Netherlands at its best. I am proud of that.

I conclude: Two days ago, I used a football metaphor when I said that the ball was on the penalty spot. As chair of this edition of the NSS, I'm delighted that the NSS countries and organizations have scored a goal and that we have taken another step towards making the world safer. But we are not there yet. The NSS process will continue, and in 2 years, we'll meet again to raise the bar even higher in all our interests.

The summit in 2016 will be chaired by the man who initiated the NSS process, President Obama. So now, Barack, I'm pleased to give the floor to you.

President Obama. Thank you so much. Prime Minister Rutte, we could not be more grateful for your leadership in this entire process, and so thank you so much.

With your indulgence, before I speak a little bit about this summit, I'd like to say a few words about a tragedy that recently took place back in the United States. Over the weekend, a massive landslide swept through a tiny town called Oso in Washington State. And while I won't get ahead of the ongoing response and rescue operations, we know that part of this tightly knit community has been lost.

First responders have acted bravely, despite still-dangerous conditions. The American Red Cross has opened multiple shelters. And the people of Washington State have been quick to help and comfort their fellow citizens.

I just spoke to Governor Inslee, who swiftly declared a state of the emergency. I signed that emergency declaration to make sure he's got all the resources that he needs. My administration is in contact with them on an ongoing basis. FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers have also been onsite to offer their assistance and expertise.

So I would just ask all Americans to send their thoughts and prayers to Washington State and the community of Oso and the families and friends of those who continue to be missing. We hope for the best, but we recognize this is a tough situation.

Now, as for our work here in the The Hague, I want to just repeat the extraordinary work that Mark has done in helping to organize this. King Willem-Alexander and the people of the Netherlands, your hospitality has been remarkable, your organization has been flawless. To all the people who were involved in putting this together, including those who were putting up with the traffic that I caused, I want to say thank you.

I'm told there's a Dutch word that captures this spirit, which doesn't translate exactly into English. But let me say that my first visit to the Netherlands has been truly *gezellig.* [*Laughter*]

I convened the first Nuclear Security Summit in Washington 4 years ago because I believed that we need a serious and sustained global effort to deal with one of the greatest threats to international security, and that's the specter of nuclear terrorism. We made further progress at our second summit in Seoul. And under your Prime Minister's stewardship, we've built on that progress here.

In keeping with the spirit of these summits, this was not about vague commitments, it was about taking tangible and concrete steps to secure more of the world's nuclear material so it never falls in the hands of terrorists. And that's what we've done.

In particular, I want to commend Belgium and Italy for completing the removal of their excess supplies of highly enriched uranium and plutonium so that those supplies can be eliminated. In a major commitment, Japan announced that it will work with the United States to eliminate hundreds of kilograms of weapons-usable nuclear material from one of their experimental reactors. That's enough for a dozen—for dozens of nuclear weapons.

Dozens of other nations have agreed to take specific steps towards improving nuclear security in their own countries and to support our global efforts. Some have pledged to convert their research reactors to low-enriched uranium, which cannot be used to make a bomb. We've set new goals for implementing our nuclear security measures, including sharing

more information to show that we're all living up to our commitments.

I've made it clear that the United States will continue to do our part as well. Our nuclear regulator will develop new guidelines to strengthen cybersecurity at our nuclear power plants. And we've pledged to pursue the production of a key medical isotope used to treat illnesses like cancer without relying on weapons-usable material. We're also going to work with our partners around the world to install more radiation detection equipment at ports and transit sites in order to combat nuclear smuggling.

And all of this builds on our previous efforts. Twelve countries and two dozen nuclear facilities around the world have now rid themselves entirely of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. Dozens of nations have boosted security at their nuclear storage sites or built their own countersmuggling teams or created new centers to improve nuclear security and training. The International Atomic Energy Agency, or the IAEA, is now stronger and more countries have ratified the treaties and international partnerships at the heart of our efforts. So we've seen a fundamental shift in our approach to nuclear security.

But as Mark indicated, we still have a lot more work to do to fulfill the ambitious goals we set 4 years ago to fully secure all nuclear and radiological material, civilian and military, so that it can no longer pose a risk to any of our citizens. I believe this is essential to the security of the entire world, and given the catastrophic consequences of even a single attack, we cannot be complacent.

I'll close by reminding everyone that one of the achievements of our first summit in 2010 was Ukraine's decision to remove all its highly enriched uranium from its nuclear fuel sites. Had that not happened, those dangerous nuclear materials would still be there now, and the difficult situation we're dealing with in Ukraine today would involve yet another level of concern. So it's a vivid reminder that the more of this material we can secure, the safer all of our countries will be. We've made progress. We've got more to do. We're going to continue our work, and I look forward to hosting the fourth Nuclear Security Summit in the United States in 2 years.

So thank you again, Mark, and all your team as well as the people of the Netherlands for this outstanding summit.

Moderator. Thank you, Mr. President. We will go straight to the questions now, and the first question will be Julie Pace, Associated Press.

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Ukraine/International Sanctions Against Russia/National Security Agency's Electronic Surveillance Program

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You've been criticized during this dispute with Russia as not understanding President Putin's motivations. As recently as last month, you and others in your administration said you thought Putin was reflecting or pausing his incursion into Crimea. Did you misread Putin's intentions? And what do you think his motivations are now?

And if I could just quickly ask on NSA, when you spoke about the NSA review in January, you said you weren't sold on the option of having phone companies hold metadata and you thought it raised additional privacy concerns. What has changed for you on that matter since that time, and do you think Congress will pass the legislation you're seeking?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, there are leaders in Europe who have concerns about the sector sanctions the President has proposed on Russia's economy. Do you think any of those leaders have been—have had their concerns alleviated during their talks with the President over the past few days? Thank you.

President Obama. All right, let me see if I can remember all these. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Rutte. I have only one question. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. With respect to President Putin's motivation, I think there's been a lot of speculation. I'm less interested in motivation and more interested in the facts and the principles that not only the United States, but the entire international community, are looking to uphold. I don't think that any of us have been

under any illusion that Russia has been very interested in controlling what happens to Ukraine. That's not new, that's been the case for years now. That's been the case dating back to the Orange Revolution.

But what we have said consistently throughout this process is that it is up to the Ukrainian people to make their own decisions about how they organize themselves and who they interact with. And it's always been our belief that Ukraine is going to have a relationship to Russia—there is a strong historic bond between the two countries—but that that does not justify Russia encroaching on Ukraine's territorial integrity or sovereignty.

That's exactly what's happened. And I said very early on that should Russia do so, there would be consequences. And working with our European partners and our international partners, we have put in place sanctions that have already had some impact on the Russian economy.

Now, moving forward, we have said—and I want to be very clear about this—we're not recognizing what has happened in Crimea. The notion that a referendum sloppily organized over the course of 2 weeks would somehow justify the breaking off of Crimea and the annexation by Russia, that somehow that would be a valid process, I think the overwhelming majority of the world rejects. But we are also concerned about further encroachment by Russia into Ukraine.

So what I announced and what the European Council announced was that we were consulting and putting in place the framework, the architecture, for additional sanctions, additional costs should Russia take this next step.

What we also said—and we'll continue to say—is that there is another path available to Russia. The Ukrainian Government has said it is prepared to negotiate with Russia, that it is prepared to recognize its international obligations. And the international community has been supportive of a diplomatic process that would allow a deescalation of tensions, a moving back of Russian troops from Ukraine's borders, and rapidly organized elections that allow the Ukrainian people to choose their leadership. And my expectation is, is that if the Ukrainian people are allowed to make their own decisions, their decision will be that they want to have a relationship with Europe and they want to have a relationship with Russia, and that this is not a zero-sum game.

And I think that Prime Minister Yatsenyuk and the current Government have shown remarkable restraint and are prepared to go down that diplomatic path. It is now up to Russia to act responsibly and show itself to be once again willing to abide by international rules and international norms. And if it chooses to do so, I think that there can be a better outcome. If it fails to do so, there will be additional costs. And those will have some disruptive effect to the global economy, but they'll have the greatest impact on Russia. So I think that will be a bad choice for President Putin to make, but ultimately, he is the President of Russia, and he's the one who's going to be making that decision. He just has to understand that there's a choice to be made here.

With respect—even though this was directed at Mark, I just want to address this issue of sectoral sanctions. So far what we've done is we've put in place sanctions that impact individuals, restricts visas being issued to them, freezes their assets. We have identified one bank in particular in Russia that was well known to be the bank of choice for many of the persons who support and facilitate Russian officials from carrying out some of these activities. But what we've held off on are more broad-based sanctions that would impact entire sectors of the Russian economy.

It has not just been my suggestion, but it has also been the European Council's suggestion, that should Russia go further, such sectoral sanctions would be appropriate. And that would include areas potentially like energy or finance or arm sales or trade that exists between Europe and the United States and Russia.

And what we're doing now is, at a very technical level, examining the impacts of each of these sanctions. Some particular sanctions would hurt some countries more than others. But all of us recognize that we have to stand up

for a core principle that lies at the heart of the international order and that facilitated European union and the incredible prosperity and peace that Europe has enjoyed now for decades.

And so although it could cause some disruptions to each of our economies or certain industries, what I've been encouraged by is the firmness and the willingness on the part of all countries to look at ways in which they can participate in this process. Our preference throughout will be to resolve this diplomatically, but I think we're prepared—as we've already shown—to take the next step if the situation gets worse.

Finally, on Ukraine, I think it's very important that we spend as much effort on bolstering the economy inside of Ukraine and making sure that the elections proceed in an orderly fashion. And so my hope is that the IMF is able to complete a package for Ukraine rapidly to stabilize their finances and their economy. The OSCE, other international organizations, are sending in observers and monitors, and we're providing technical assistance to make sure that the elections are free and fair. The sooner those elections take place, the sooner the economy is stabilized, the better positioned the Ukrainian people will be in terms of managing what is a very challenging situation.

With respect to the NSA—and I'll be just brief on this—I said several months ago that I was assigning our various agencies in the IC—the intelligence community—to bring me new options with respect to the telephone database program. They have presented me now with an option that I think is workable. And it addresses the two core concerns that people had.

Number one, the idea of Government storing bulk data generally. This ensures that the Government is not in possession of that bulk data. I want to emphasize once again that some of the dangers that people hypothesized when it came to bulk data, there were clear safeguards against. But I recognize that people were concerned about what might happen in the future with that bulk data. This proposal that's been presented to me would eliminate that concern.

The second thing the people were concerned about is making sure that not only is a judge overseeing the overall program, but also that a judge is looking at each individual inquiry that's made into a database. And this new plan that's been presented to me does that.

So overall, I'm confident that it allows us to do what is necessary in order to deal with the dangers of a terrorist attack, but does so in a way that addresses some of the concerns that people had raised. And I'm looking forward to working with Congress to make sure that we go ahead and pass the enabling legislation quickly so that we can get on with the business of effective law enforcement.

Prime Minister Rutte. On Ukraine, let me make it absolutely clear that the European Union and U.S.—and yesterday we saw alignment within the G–7—we are working very closely together, and I can fully support all the answers which you just gave—have just given on the question you asked.

Maybe I can add one thing, which is the highly—the fact that the Russian economy is very much gas and oil dependent, and that means that economic sanctions, if they will be necessary—and we are not there yet—if economic sanctions will be necessary because this conflict would escalate to a next stage, and if this were to happen, these sanctions would hit Russia very badly. And obviously, you can never guarantee that the people in Europe, in Canada, in the U.S. would not be hurt. But obviously, we will make sure that we will design these sanctions in such a way that they will have maximum impact on the Russian economy and not on the European, the Canadian, the Japanese, or the American economy. That is our way. But we worked very closely together, and we seek total alignment on this issue.

Moderator. Okay, thank you. Next question, Eelco Bosch van Rosenthal [Nederlandse Omroep Stichting].

Ukraine/Russian Military Buildup on Ukraine-Russia Border/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Question for President Obama, on Ukraine, reportedly there are about 30,000

Russian troops on the border with Ukraine. What guarantees can you give to the people of Eastern Ukraine, to the people in the Baltic States, Moldova, other countries that they will not be next when it comes to the Russian politics of annexation? And with regard to that also, is this a done deal? Is there any doubt in your mind that Putin will return Crimea to where it belongs, according to the West? Or is this diplomatic show of force basically just to prevent another land grab somewhere else?

President Obama. On the second question first, on the issue of Crimea, it's not a done deal in the sense that the international community by and large is not recognizing the annexation of Crimea. Obviously, the facts on the ground are that the Russian military controls Crimea. There are a number of individuals inside of Crimea that are supportive of that process. There's no expectation that they will be dislodged by force. And so what we can bring to bear are the legal arguments, the diplomatic arguments, the political pressure, the economic sanctions that are already in place to try to make sure that there's a cost to that process.

But I think it would be dishonest to suggest that there's a simple solution to resolving what has already taken place in Crimea. Although, history has a funny way of moving in twists and turns and not just in a straight line, so how the situation in Crimea evolves in part depends on making sure that the international community stays unified in indicating that this was an illegal action on the part of Russia.

With respect to the Russian troops that are along the border of Ukraine at the moment, right now they are on Russian soil. And if they stay on Russian soil, we oppose what appears to be an effort in intimidation, but Russia has a right legally to have its troops on its own soil. I don't think it's a done deal, and I think that Russia is still making a series of calculations. And again, those calculations will be impacted in part by how unified the United States and Europe are and the international community is in saying to Russia that this is not how, in the 21st century, we resolve disputes.

I think it's particularly important for all of us to dismiss this notion that somehow Russian speakers or Russian nationals inside of Ukraine are threatened and that somehow that would justify Russian action. There has been no evidence that Russian speakers have been in any way threatened. If anything, what we've seen are provocateurs who have created scuffles inside of Ukraine. But when I hear analogies, for example, to Kosovo, where you had thousands of people who were being slaughtered by their Government, the—it's a comparison that makes absolutely no sense. And I think it's important for everybody to be clear and strip away some of the possible excuses for a potential Russian action.

With respect to the broader issue of States that are bordering Russia and what assurances do they have about future land grabs, as you put it, obviously, some of those countries are NATO countries. And as NATO allies, we believe that the cornerstone of our security is making sure that all of us, including the United States, are abiding by article 5 and the notion of collective defense. And what we are now doing is organizing even more intensively to make sure that we have contingency plans and that every one of our NATO allies has assurances that we will act in their defense against any threats.

That's what NATO is all about, and that's been the cornerstone of peace in the transatlantic region now for several generations. So we will uphold that. And there will be a series of NATO consultations. A NATO ministerial is going to be coming up in which we further develop and deepen those plans. But I have not seen any NATO members who have not expressed a firm determination with respect to NATO members.

Now, those who are—those countries, border countries, that are outside of NATO, what we can do is what we're doing with Ukraine, which is trying to make sure that there is sufficient international pressure and a spotlight shined on the situation in some of these countries and that we're also doing everything we can to bolster their economies, make sure that through various diplomatic and economic initiatives that they feel supported and that they know that we stand by them. But when it

comes to a potential military response, that is defined by NATO membership; that's what NATO is about.

Moderator. Jon Karl from ABC News.

U.S. Foreign Policy/Syria/Ukraine/Russia/2012 Republican Presidential Nominee W. Mitt Romney

Q. Mr. President, thank you. In China, in Syria, in Egypt, and now in Russia, we've seen you make strong statements, issue warnings that have been ignored. Are you concerned that America's influence in the world, your influence in the world, is on the decline? And in the light of recent developments, do you think Mitt Romney had a point when he said that Russia is America's biggest geopolitical foe? If not Russia, who?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, do you think these sanctions will change Vladimir Putin's calculation or cause him to back down? And do you see there's a—where do you see a Russian red line, where if they go any further, if they go into Eastern Ukraine, into Moldova, where options beyond sanctions have to be considered? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, Jonathan, I think if the premise of the question is that whenever the United States objects to an action and other countries don't immediately do exactly what we want, that that's been the norm, that would pretty much erase most of 20th century history. I think that there's a distinction between us being very clear about what we think is an appropriate action, what we stand for, what principles we believe in versus what is, I guess, implied in the question that we should engage in some sort of military action to prevent something.

The truth of the matter is, is that the world has always been messy. And what the United States has consistently been able to do—and we continue to be able to do—is to mobilize the international community around a set of principles and norms. And where our own self-defense may not be involved, we may not act militarily, that does not mean that we don't steadily push against those forces that would violate those principles and ideals that we care about.

So yes, you're right, Syria—the Syrian civil war is not solved. And yet Syria has never been more isolated. With respect to the situation in Ukraine, we have not gone to war with Russia. I think there's a significant precedent to that in the past. That does not mean that Russia is not isolated. In fact, Russia is far more isolated in this instance than it was 5 years ago with respect to Georgia and more isolated than it was certainly during most of the 20th century, when it was part of the Soviet Union.

The point is that there are always going to be bad things that happen around the world. And the United States, as the most powerful nation in the world, understandably, is looked to for solutions to those problems. And what we have to make sure we're doing are—that we are putting all elements of our power behind finding solutions, working with our international partners, standing up for those principles and ideals in a clear way.

There are going to be moments where military action is appropriate. There are going to be some times where that's not in the interests—national security interests, of the United States or some of our partners, but that doesn't mean that we're not going to continue to make the effort or speak clearly about what we think is right and wrong. And that's what we've done.

With respect to Mr. Romney's assertion that Russia is our number-one geopolitical foe, the truth of the matter is that America has got a whole lot of challenges. Russia is a regional power that is threatening some of its immediate neighbors not out of strength, but out of weakness. Ukraine has been a country in which Russia had enormous influence for decades, since the breakup of the Soviet Union. And we have considerable influence on our neighbors. We generally don't need to invade them in order to have a strong, cooperative relationship with them. The fact that Russia felt compelled to go in militarily and lay bare these violations of international law indicates less influence, not more.

And so my response to them continues to be what I believe today, which is, Russia's actions

are a problem. They don't pose the number-one national security threat to the United States. I continue to be much more concerned, when it comes to our security, with the prospect of a nuclear weapon going off in Manhattan, which is part of the reason why the United States—showing its continued international leadership—has organized a forum over the last several years that's been able to help eliminate that threat in a consistent way.

Prime Minister Rutte. There is no geopolitical conflict which can be solved without the United States. And therefore, I applaud the fact that President Obama's administration is active in every arena: Ukraine, Iran, Syria, the Middle East peace process, and so many other parts of the world. Take the initiatives Secretary of State Kerry is taking now in the Middle East peace process. I was, in December, in the region, and I spoke with senior leaders both in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. And they are extremely grateful for the fact that America is providing that leadership.

This is difficult issue; it can't be solved overnight. There is no magic wand which can handle this. But progress is being made. Take Iran. I spoke with President Rouhani in Davos at the World Economic Forum in January. We have now interim accord. The fact that I was able—the first Dutch leader in over 30, 40 years who spoke with an Iranian leader, President Rouhani—was possible because of the interim accord, and it seems that it is holding. America provides leadership there.

So I really applaud President Obama's role in all these major issues. And it is necessary because United States is leader of the free world and needs to provide that leadership, and he is doing that.

Then, on your question about President Putin, I cannot—it would be difficult to exactly judge what is happening in the senior leadership in Moscow, in Russia, at this moment. But as I said earlier, a highly undiversified economy like the Russian economy—which is so much oil and gas dependent, which has not invested in infrastructure, invested in other areas of its economy—it will be worried if there is a risk in the financial sector or in weapons or in trade or indeed in energy. There could be potential sanctions that will hurt them. And as I said earlier, we have to design them in such a way that they will particularly hit Russia and not Europe, the U.S., Canada, or Japan. That is what we are working on, and we hope we won't need them.

And then, on the red lines, I cannot envisage this conflict ending up in a military conflict. I don't think that is likely. I don't think anybody wants it. And at the same time, I totally agree with President Obama's answer on article 5, when this conflict will be taken to the borders of one of the NATO countries. But luckily, that is at this moment not the case.

Moderator. Okay, final questions for—[*inaudible*].

Europe-U.S. Relations/National Security Agency's Electronic Surveillance Program

Q. Mr. President, you met a lot of leaders here; many were angry about the NSA story. Have you fixed the relationships with these leaders? And the second question is, many are shocked by the extent of which the NSA collects private data. Today we heard in the New York Times that you plan to end the systematic collection of data of Americans. But can you address the concerns of the Dutch and the rest of the world about their privacy?

President Obama. Well, first of all, we have had a consistent, unbreakable bond between the leaders of Europe over the last several decades, and it's across many dimensions: economic, military, counterterrorism, cultural. And so any one issue can be an irritant in the relationship between the countries, but it doesn't define those relationships. And that continues to be the case, and that has been the case throughout the last couple of years.

As I said in a speech that I gave earlier this year, the United States is very proud of its record of working with countries around the world to prevent terrorism or nuclear proliferation or human trafficking or a whole host of issues that all of us I think would be concerned about. Intelligence plays a critical role in that process.

What we've seen is that as technology has evolved, the guidelines and structures that constrain how our intelligence agencies operated have not kept pace with these advances in technology. And although, having examined over the last year, year and a half what's been done, I'm confident that everybody in our intelligence agencies operates in the best of intentions and is not snooping into the privacy of ordinary Dutch, German, French, or American citizens. What is true is, is that there is a danger because of these new technologies that at some point, it could be abused. And that's why I initiated a broad-based review of what we could do.

There are a couple of things that we did that are unprecedented. In my speech, I announced that, for the first time, under my direction, that we are going to treat the privacy concerns of non-U.S. persons as seriously as we are the constraints that already exist by law on U.S. persons. We're doing that not because we're bound by international law, but because ultimately, it's the right thing to do.

With respect to some of the aspects of data collection, what I've been very clear about is, is that there has to be a narrow purpose to it, not a broad-based purpose; but it's rather based on a specific concern around terrorism or counterproliferation or human trafficking or something that I think all of us would say has to be pursued.

And so what I've tried to do then is to make sure that my intelligence teams are consulting very closely at each stage with their counterparts in other nations so that there's greater transparency in terms of what exactly we're doing, what we're not doing. Some of the reporting here in Europe, as well as the United States, frankly, has been pretty sensationalized. I think the fears about our privacy in this age of the Internet and big data are justified. I think the actual facts—people would have an assurance if—that if you are just the ordinary citizen in any of these countries, that your privacy, in fact, is not being invaded on.

But I recognize that because of these revelations, that there's a process that's taking place where we have to win back the trust not just of governments, but more importantly, of ordinary citizens. And that's not going to happen overnight, because I think that there's a tendency to be skeptical of government and to be skeptical in particular of U.S. intelligence services. And so it's going be necessary for us—the step we took that was announced today, I think, is an example of us slowly, systematically putting in more checks, balances, legal processes.

The good news is that I'm very confident that it can be achieved, and I'm also confident that the core values that America has always believed in, in terms of privacy, rule of law, individual rights, that that has guided the United States for many years and it will continue to guide us into the future. Okay?

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you again.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4 p.m. at the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag. In his remarks, the President referred to Allison M. MacFarlane, Chairwoman, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. He also referred to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk of Ukraine
March 25, 2014

On the occasion of the third Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, the United States and Ukraine today reaffirm their strategic partnership and emphasize the important role of nuclear nonproliferation in that relationship. The United States values its 20-year partnership with Ukraine on these issues. Our nonproliferation partnership dates from Ukraine's 1994 decision to remove all nuclear weapons from its territory and to accede to the Treaty

on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon state. In the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, the United States, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomed these Ukrainian actions, and they reaffirmed their commitment to Ukraine to respect the independence, sovereignty, and existing borders of Ukraine. The United States government reaffirms that commitment today to the new Ukrainian government and the people of Ukraine, including in Crimea. The United States government condemns Russia's failure to abide by its commitments under the Budapest Memorandum with its unilateral military actions in Ukraine. Russia's actions undermine the foundation of the global security architecture and endanger European peace and security. Ukraine and the United States emphasize that they will not recognize Russia's illegal attempt to annex Crimea. Crimea is an integral part of Ukraine. The United States will continue to help Ukraine affirm its sovereignty and territorial integrity. As the people of Ukraine work to restore unity, peace, and security to their country, the United States will stand by their side.

The United States and Ukraine reiterate their commitment to upholding their nuclear nonproliferation commitments. The United States recognizes the importance of the 2012 removal of all highly enriched uranium from Ukraine. This removal again highlighted Ukraine's leadership in nuclear security and nonproliferation, as we collectively work together to secure the world's vulnerable nuclear material. As part of its support for this effort, the United States committed in 2010 to work with Ukraine to construct a Neutron Source Facility at the Kharkiv Institute for Physics and Technology. This month construction of the Neutron Source Facility was completed. The facility, equipped with the most up-to-date technology to operate at the highest safety standards, provides Ukraine with new research capabilities and the ability to produce industrial and medical isotopes for the benefit of the Ukrainian people.

This state of the art facility is representative of the modern, European state the Government of Ukraine is committed to building. To build on this important cooperation, the United States will continue to provide technical support for the Neutron Source Facility as Ukraine completes the necessary final equipment installation, testing, and start-up to make the facility fully operational as soon as practical.

This successful effort reflects broad U.S.-Ukrainian cooperation on nuclear security and nonproliferation. Our countries recently extended the U.S.-Ukraine Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Umbrella Agreement and the U.S.-Ukraine Agreement Concerning Operational Safety Enhancements, Risk Reduction Measures, and Nuclear Safety Regulation for Civilian Nuclear Facilities in Ukraine.

The United States and Ukraine intend to continue to partner to prevent nuclear proliferation by improving Ukraine's ability to detect nuclear materials on its borders, to provide physical protection at sites with nuclear or radioactive materials, and to maintain an adequate export control system in order to help realize the goals of the Nuclear Security Summits.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by President Obama and President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan on Cooperation in the Sphere of Nonproliferation and Strengthening Nuclear Security

March 25, 2014

The Republic of Kazakhstan and the United States of America have confirmed a shared commitment to nonproliferation and strengthening nuclear security.

The Republic of Kazakhstan and the United States of America note with satisfaction the successful efforts of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program and will continue to strengthen the physical security on the former Semipalatinsk Test Site.

The United States of America will continue to partner with the Republic of Kazakhstan to strengthen its joint efforts to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear and radiological materials.

The United States of America welcomes the Republic of Kazakhstan's activities to strengthen nuclear security and implement decisions of the Washington and Seoul Nuclear Security Summits, including by converting the VVR–K research reactor at the Institute of Nuclear Physics (INP) to low enriched uranium (LEU) fuel, downblending the INP's highly enriched uranium (HEU) material and removing the HEU spent fuel from the reactor. The United States and Kazakhstan will continue to work together to convert Kazakhstan's remaining HEU reactors to LEU fuel and eliminate all remaining HEU research reactor fuel as soon as technically feasible.

The United States of America supports the efforts of the Republic of Kazakhstan to host the IAEA LEU Bank, establish a Regional Nuclear Security Training Center, and strengthen its emergency preparedness, response and mitigation capabilities.

The Republic of Kazakhstan and the United States of America attach importance to Nuclear Security Summit process.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by the United States and the European Union on Combating Illicit Trafficking

March 25, 2014

The European Union and the United States of America, in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), each understand the importance of nuclear security and embrace the shared international responsibility to develop and promote systems and measures for the prevention of, detection of, and response to nuclear or other radioactive materials out of regulatory control. In recognition of this international responsibility, and in support of the Nuclear Security Summit Key Topic of Combating Illicit Trafficking, and in line with the conclusions of the successful "International Conference on Nuclear Security: Enhancing Global Efforts" organised by the IAEA in Vienna on 1–5 July 2013, we are taking the following initial steps:

- The IAEA Nuclear Security Series, specifically the Implementing Guide on Nuclear Security Systems and Measures for the Detection of Nuclear and Other Radioactive Material out of Regulatory Control, emphasizes the importance of detection instruments in the context of a national level Nuclear Security Detection Architecture. In support of this principle, the European Commission Directorate General for Home Affairs (EC–HOME), the Joint Research Centre (EC–JRC), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have collaborated through the Border Monitoring Working Group in the conduct of the Illicit Trafficking Radiation Assessment Program (ITRAP+10) test campaign.
- The ITRAP+10 effort demonstrates a crucial facet of nuclear detection as outlined in the IAEA Nuclear Security Series, namely the evaluation of nuclear and radiological detection technologies against a set of common performance goals. Over the past three years, this international partnership tested about 70 different models of detection and identification equipment against international

guidance and standards. Now that testing has been completed, we pledge to share the findings of this test campaign to inform, as appropriate, future revisions to the IAEA Nuclear Security Series and other relevant international standards. Furthermore, we intend to make available scientific and technical data on commercially available detection systems with the international community with the aim of documenting detection instrument capabilities, exemplifying proper usage and deployment, and promoting new research and development efforts.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by the United States, Belgium, France, Germany, and South Korea on Multinational Cooperation on High-Density Low-Enriched Uranium Fuel Development

March 25, 2014

Belgium, France, Germany, the Republic of Korea and the United States, the parties to this joint statement recognize that the ultimate goal of nuclear security is advanced by minimizing highly-enriched uranium (HEU) in civilian use, which is affirmed in the Washington and Seoul Summit Communiqués and is also a key issue on the agenda of the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit.

In continuation of the Joint Statement on Quadrilateral Cooperation on High-density Low-enriched Uranium Fuel Production made in Seoul, the original four parties plus Germany are working together to develop and qualify new high-density low-enriched uranium LEU fuels as part of an effort to convert research reactors from HEU fuel to LEU fuel.

High performance research reactors use significant quantities of HEU each year and require unique and complex fuels to operate. The five parties are pooling their expertise and resources to develop, qualify and fabricate new high-density LEU fuels with the ultimate goal of converting the remaining high performance research reactors in the world to operate on these fuels when technically and economically feasible.

The parties are focusing their efforts on uranium molybdenum (UMo), both as a monolithic fuel foil and as UMo powder dispersed in an aluminium matrix. In the last years the parties have had particular yet not exclusive technical foci. Europe (Belgium, France and Germany) manufactured and tested in-pile full-scale fuel plates based on coated UMo powder technology; the United States manufactured and tested in-pile full-scale fuel plates based on coated monolithic UMo technology. As laid out in the 2012 Joint Statement, the Republic of Korea manufactured and made available to the community UMo powders based on advanced atomization technology, and intends to continue producing and providing such UMo powders for further qualification tests of new high-density dispersion fuel.

We express our shared confidence that this international cooperation among Belgium, France, Germany, the Republic of Korea and the United States to develop high density LEU fuels will be strengthened by intensified and coordinated collaboration that will contribute directly to the ultimate goal of minimizing HEU in civilian use. Cooperation and support from the international community are crucial for making available LEU fuel that is suitable for high performance research reactors, and we agree to share the benefits of all technology developed together in this joint effort, with conditions to be set out in due time.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement on Enhancing the Security of the Maritime Supply Chain
March 25, 2014

This gift basket records the intent of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Georgia, Germany, Israel, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States, to seek enhanced measures to permanently remove nuclear and radiological materials that are out of regulatory control from the global supply chain, while effectively deterring, detecting, and appropriately responding to trafficking of nuclear and radiological material and weapons through the maritime shipping system.

The Nuclear Security Summit recognizes the importance of a national level approach or framework for the prevention, detection and response of nuclear and radiological materials that are out of regulatory control. An important element of such an approach is ensuring that illicit trafficking of nuclear and radiological material and weapons does not occur through the global supply chain, including its maritime shipping component. In support of this objective, we the parties to this statement declare our commitment to undertake the following actions:

- States with radiation detection capabilities at their large container seaports will continue to maintain robust capabilities and be prepared to assist States that wish to initiate similar radiation detection programs. This assistance could take the form of sharing best practices and lessons learned, including alarm resolution and disposition, and in some cases, the provision of financing, training, and technical guidance.
- By the next Nuclear Security Summit in 2016, interested States will participate in a workshop, co-hosted by the United States, aimed at enhancing measures to detect and permanently remove nuclear and radiological materials that are out of regulatory control from the global supply chain. Topics for the workshop could include current and potential future developments in:
  - a) states' national laws, regulations, and procedures;
  - b) national response plans;
  - c) disposition approaches;
  - d) targeting and screening;
  - e) best practices in areas such as detection, forensics, law enforcement; and
  - f) new technologies.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Personnel to Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic
March 25, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As I initially reported on October 14, 2011, and most recently reported on December 13, 2013, the United States is pursuing a comprehensive strategy to help the governments and people of central Africa in their efforts to stop the atrocities committed by the Lord's Resistance Army. In furtherance of that strategy, U.S. military personnel with appropriate combat equipment have deployed to Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic to support regional forces from the African Union's Regional Task Force that are working to apprehend or remove Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph

Kony and other senior leaders from the battlefield and to protect local populations.

Regional forces have consistently identified air mobility support with increased range and speed as one of the most-needed capabilities to pursue the remaining Lord's Resistance Army leaders across a wide swath of one of the world's poorest, least governed, and most remote regions. To enhance U.S. support to these regional forces, U.S. aircraft, aircrews, and support personnel deployed to central Africa on March 23 and 24, 2014. The approximately 150 additional personnel will principally operate and maintain U.S. aircraft to provide air mobility support to foreign partner forces.

The total number of U.S. military personnel deployed to the central Africa region for this mission is now approximately 280. The aircraft and personnel providing the enhanced air mobility support will deploy to the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas of central Africa episodically, as they are available, consistent with other Department of Defense requirements.

During these deployments, the number of U.S. Armed Forces deployed to the central Africa region will fluctuate, and may increase to as many as approximately 300.

As I previously reported, U.S. forces will not themselves engage Lord's Resistance Army forces unless necessary in self-defense.

This deployment is in furtherance of the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, including the policy expressed in the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009, Public Law 111–172, enacted May 24, 2010. I have approved this deployment pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am making this supplemental report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this matter. A classified annex to this report provides additional detail.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Park Geun-hye of South Korea and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in The Hague, Netherlands
March 25, 2014

President Obama. I want to thank President Park and Prime Minister Abe for being here today. I have worked closely with both the President and the Prime Minister, but this is the first time that the three of us have had an opportunity to meet together and discuss some of the serious challenges that we all face.

Obviously, Japan and the Republic of Korea are two of our closest allies in the world and our two most significant and powerful allies in the Asia-Pacific region. The ties between our peoples run deep. We do an extraordinary amount of trade together. Our alliances with South Korea and Japan uphold regional peace and security. So our meeting today is a reflection of the United States critical role in the Asia-Pacific region, but that role depends on the strength of our alliances.

One of the things that brings us together today is our shared concern about North Korea and its nuclear weapons program. Over the last 5 years, close coordination between our three countries has succeeded in changing the game with North Korea, and our trilateral cooperation has sent a strong signal to Pyongyang that its provocations and threats will be met with a unified response and that the U.S. commitment to the security of both Japan and the Republic of Korea is unwavering and that a nuclear North Korea is unacceptable.

So I very much look forward to discussing some of the specific steps that we can take to

deepen that coordination in terms of both diplomacy and military cooperation. And that includes joint exercises and on missile defense.

So again, I want to thank President Park and Prime Minister Abe for being here after a long summit. I appreciate their delegations being here as well. I think it's very important for our three nations to display this kind of unity and shared determination. It's an important message to our citizens; it's an important message to the Asia-Pacific region. And this also gives me an opportunity to lay the groundwork for even more productive meetings when I visit both the Republic of Korea and Japan in April.

So thank you again, Madam Prime Minister—or Madam President and Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you very much. Thank you.

President Park. Given the increasingly uncertain developments in North Korea, the critical need for closer coordination among the three countries with regard to North Korea, the North Korean nuclear issue, the chance to engage in an exchange of views with President Obama and Prime Minister Abe is very significant. The North Korean nuclear issue poses a major threat to peace and stability in the region, and it is vital that the international community, including Korea, the U.S., and Japan, fashion a united response.

The fact that the leaders of the three countries have gathered together and they're discussing the issue of the North Korean nuclear weapons issue is in and of itself very significant. Should North Korea embark on the path to denuclearization on the basis of sincerity, then there will be a way forward to address the difficulties confronting the North Korean people.

The United States has worked very hard to make today's meeting happen. I sincerely hope that this meeting will offer a chance for us to reaffirm our trilateral coordination and strengthen cooperation on the nuclear front.

Prime Minister Abe. I am so delighted that we are able to hold the Japan-U.S.-Republic of Korea trilateral summit today. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to President Obama for hosting this summit. And I am so very happy to be able to see President Park Geun-hye.

It is highly meaningful and also timely that the leaders of the three countries sharing basic values and strategic interests are gathering together to have extensive discussions of security. Particularly, it is extremely important to be able to confirm close cooperation amongst Japan, United States, and the Republic of Korea on the issue of North Korea. And the three countries would like to cooperate so that the North Korea would be able to take a positive stance with regard to nuclear and missile issue and the abduction issue and also humanitarian issues such as the separated families of the Republic of Korea.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. at the U.S. Ambassador's residence. President Park spoke in Korean, and Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and their remarks were translated by interpreters.

Remarks With King Philippe and Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo of Belgium at Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial in Waregem, Belgium

March 26, 2014

King Philippe. Mr. President, we are deeply moved to stand here with you amidst the graves of brave American soldiers who gave their lives for our freedom. We remember and honor all those who took part in the First World War and who were killed or maimed and those who, even if they survived, were often scarred forever by their dreadful experience. We will always be grateful for the sacrifice.

The United States of America fought side by side with Belgium and other European na-

tions. As President Woodrow Wilson said: "There is a price which is too great to pay for peace, and that price can be put in one word. One cannot pay the price of self-respect."

For Belgium, this was true when my great-grandfather, King Albert I, led our country in its rejection of the Kaiser's ultimatum and defended Belgium's status of neutrality. The horrors of the trench warfare, including the use of chemical weapons for the first time ever in world history, the deaths of so many soldiers—all this was the acid bath in which many of the old beliefs were dissolved.

The First World War led to many changes in all our countries. Many reforms were introduced in the following years. However, the so-called "war to end all wars" was followed by an even more brutal one, which engulfed most of the world, and which, moreover, saw the heart-rending atrocity of the Holocaust.

Our countries have learned the hard way that national sovereignty quickly reaches its limits when confronted with heavily armed adversary who do not respect that sovereignty. Thanks to visionary people, we started on the road of European integration. It was and remains a rocky road, but we are truly convinced that it is the only one. Today, international cooperation, both regional and global, is more than ever necessary to roll back the scourge of war and violence with the tragic wake of human suffering.

This year's ceremonies of remembrance must inspire all peace-loving nations to continue to stand shoulder to shoulder to spread the rule of law, human rights, and respect for each other. This is the best bulwark against war.

I know that the United States and Belgium will continue stand together in this endeavor.

Prime Minister Di Rupo. President Obama, Your Majesty, ladies and gentlemen: We are gathered today to remember, to remember the millions of soldiers and civilians who died during the First World War in Belgium and in the rest of Europe; and here, in Waregem, to especially remember the Americans who lost their lives in our cities in—and our countrysides.

On behalf of Belgium, I will honor their memory and thank them and their families for their terrible sacrifice, a sacrifice that will remain a part of our history and will always have a place in the hearts of the Belgian and American people. We will never forget.

Mr. President, Your Majesty, the ties between Belgium and the United States of America are very strong. I have said this before, and I'm saying it again today in the presence of President Obama: We, the Belgian and American peoples, share and cherish the same values of freedom, democracy, and progress. We have fought long and hard to obtain them, and we must work hard every day to keep them alive.

These values are our most precious gift to our young people and future generation. Therefore, we have to continue to draw lessons for the terrible war that started 100 years ago. And above all, we have to prevent new conflicts. Those who ignore the past are taking the risk to relive it. Each steps to reconcile people is a step away from war. Each step to open up our hearts and minds is a step toward peace.

Mr. President, Your Majesty, ladies and gentlemen, the American sons who fell on our soil are our sons. I promise you, Mr. President, that we will always keep their memory alive. And the same time, we will never forget our Second World War liberators. They, as well, were examples of courage. We are determined to ensure the twin founts of peace, democracy, and human rights. We are determined to ensure the integrity of frontiers and the respect of international law. Here next to these graves, we make a solemn commitment to continue our efforts to promote peace and solidarity amongst people.

Mr. President, Your Majesty, the guns fell silent a long time ago, as did the voices of the fallen soldiers. But their example will always continue to inspire us.

President Obama. Your Majesty King Philippe, Prime Minister Di Rupo: I am honored to be here today. Thank you for welcoming me to this sacred place. To the staff of Flanders Field Cemetery and the people of Belgium, thank you for your devotion, watching over those who rest here and preserving these hallowed grounds for all of us who live in their debt.

As His Majesty and the Prime Minister mentioned, we just spent some quiet moments among the final resting places of young men who fell nearly a century ago. And it is impossible not to be awed by the profound sacrifice they made so that we might stand here today. In this place, we remember the courage of "Brave Little Belgium." Here, we visited the grave of a young Polish immigrant to America who, just a few hours into his very first battle, gave his life for his adopted country. And here, we saw the headstones of two men from Brooklyn, New York, who lay as they fought, side by side.

Here, we also see that no soldier and no nation sacrificed alone. I'm told that this is one of more than 100 cemeteries tucked into the quiet corners of this beautiful countryside. It's estimated that beneath about 50 square miles, there rest hundreds of thousands of men: Belgian and American, French and Canadian, British and Australian, and so many others.

We talked about how many of the Americans who fought on Belgian soil during the Great War did so under the command of His Majesty's great-grandfather, King Albert. And while they didn't always share a common heritage or even a common language, the soldiers who manned the trenches were united by something larger: a willingness to fight and die for the freedom that we enjoy as their heirs.

Long after those guns fell silent, this bond has endured. Belgians and Americans have stood soldier—shoulder to shoulder with our European allies in World War II and through a long cold war, then from Afghanistan to Libya. And today, Belgium is one of our closest partners in the world, a strong and capable ally. And thanks to the extraordinary alliance between our two nations, we know a level of peace and prosperity that those who fought here could scarcely have imagined.

And so before visiting the cemetery, His Majesty, the Prime Minister, and I were able to spend some time together. I was very grateful for the opportunity. And it was a chance to reaffirm our commitment to keep—as strong as they've ever been—the bonds between our nations, a determination that I know is shared by the American and Belgian people.

Here today I'd also note that the lessons of that war speak to us still. Our nations are part of the international effort to destroy Syria's chemical weapons, the same kinds of weapons that were used to such devastating effect on these very fields. We thought we had banished their use to history, and our efforts send a powerful message that these weapons have no place in a civilized world. This is one of the ways that we can honor those who fell here.

And so this visit, this hallowed ground, reminds us that we must never, ever take our progress for granted. We must commit perennially to peace, which binds us across oceans.

In 1915, a Canadian doctor named John McCrae sat in the back of an ambulance not far from here and wrote a poem about the heavy sacrifice he had seen. They became some of the most cherished and well-known words from that war. And they ended with a plea:

> To you from failing hands we throw
> The torch; be yours to hold it high!
> If ye break faith with us who die
> We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
> In Flanders fields.

What is lesser known is that 3 years after he wrote those words—and thousands of miles away—an American schoolteacher named Moina Michael read McCrae's poem. And she was so moved that she wrote a response:

> Oh! you who sleep in "Flanders Fields,"
> Sleep sweet—to rise anew!
> We caught the torch you threw
> And holding high, we keep the Faith
> With All who died.

Your Majesty, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you again. What I've seen at Flanders Fields will stay with me always. To all who sleep here, we can say we caught the torch, we kept the faith, and Americans and Belgians

will always stand together for freedom, for dignity, and for the triumph of the human spirit.

May God bless you. May God bless the memory of all who rest beneath these fields. And may God bless the peoples of both our nations.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:20 a.m.

The President's News Conference With President Herman Van Rompuy of the European Council and President José Manuel Durão Barroso of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium
March 26, 2014

Moderator. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the press conference following the EU-U.S. Summit in Brussels. I invite first the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy to present the main results of the summit. Mr. Van Rompuy, you have the floor.

President Van Rompuy. Good afternoon. It has been a great pleasure to welcome President Obama to this EU-U.S. Summit in Brussels.

We meet at a hugely important moment, certainly for peace and security on the European Continent. Events in Ukraine and elsewhere go to show that there are many unsettling uncertainties, and that's why the solid certainty of the transatlantic relationship is so crucial. It is the bedrock to face these challenges, a bond of friendship tested by history, and that bond is shockproof. Cooperation among our countries is unrivaled. So in our meeting today, we focused on the issues where together—together—we can provide the political steer at the highest level.

We obviously spoke about Ukraine, today's most pressing matter. It was a follow-up to our excellent exchange at the G–7 meeting in The Hague 2 days ago. Europe and the United States have a strong and coordinated position. For the EU side, I refer you to the bold statements of last week's European Council. We support Ukraine and its people in their pursuit for a better life as a nation. Crimea's illegal annexation is a disgrace in the 21st century, and we will not recognize it.

The first priority is to deescalate the situation. Russia's support for an OSCE mission in Ukraine is a positive step. The fact that Russia and Ukraine's Foreign Ministers finally met in The Hague is another sign of more openness. However, if there is further escalation, we Europeans and Americans are ready to intensify sanctions. With the understanding that sanctions are a means to an end, the goal is a negotiated solution in respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and of international law.

We also stand by Georgia and Moldova, and European Union has brought forward to June the signing of the association agreement with them.

Apart from Ukraine, we talked about negotiations with Iran, about working to end the terrible war in Syria, and to stop violence and anarchy in the Central African Republic. Both are humanitarian tragedies.

The United States and Europe will continue their work to fight terrorism in the Sahel. And appalled by Egypt's mass death sentence of over 500 Muslim Brothers, we urge Egyptian authorities to restore the rule of law.

Our second major focus was the economy. We spoke about the recovery in Europe, which is taking hold. We should have 2 percent of growth next year. Thanks to much hard work, Europe and the euro zone have really moved on. The focus now is on reinforcing economic fundamentals and on jobs, and last week saw the finishing touch on the banking union, the centerpiece of a stronger euro zone.

And we also spent some time to discussing energy, especially energy security, and what we can do together to reduce Europe's dependency on Russian gas. Our G–7 Energy Ministers will meet on this soon.

We also spoke on climate change and our ambitions for the upcoming global negotiations. And today, together with President Obama, we reconfirmed our shared commitment to an ambitious transatlantic trade deal. President Barroso will say more about it in a minute.

Let me just say that in days like these, forging even stronger economic ties across the Atlantic is also a powerful political sign, a way to show our public opinions and the world who we are at heart, in Europe and in America: economies based on rules, societies based on values, and proud of being so.

Finally, today we spoke about data flows. And President Barroso and I conveyed to the President European concerns after last year's revelations on surveillance programs. These concerns are shared widely by citizens in EU member states, and we welcome the recent initiatives announced by President Obama. The United States and European Union are taking further steps to address these worries and restore trust.

On the governmental track, we have an umbrella agreement on data protection by this summer, based on equal treatment of EU and U.S. citizens. On the commercial data track, the U.S. have agreed to a review of the so-called Safe Harbor Framework. Transparency and legal certainty are essential to transatlantic trade, and we all agree on that.

Ladies and gentlemen, so all in all, a focused and productive meeting and timely too. Mr. President, we are looking forward for receiving you again in this building in less than 3 months for the G–7 summit here in Brussels.

Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you for your remarks, President Van Rompuy. I will now give the floor to the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso.

President Barroso. Thank you. First of all, President Obama, it's great to have you here in Brussels, the Capital of Europe, in the headquarters of the European institutions. Your visit sends a very strong signal, first of all, to the European citizens. They understand how important it is, this transatlantic relationship, for Europe and for the United States of America.

To American people, I'd like to say to the American people that you can count on us as your best friends and allies. And also, to the rest of the world, we remain committed and open, and we have decided to engage in all the global issues, from free trade to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, to climate action. But at the same time, we will also be firm in defending our common values, those of peace, of freedom, of the rights of the individual, the rule of law, of international law.

European Union and the United States are working together to make sure that actions that are unacceptable will bear serious consequences. And in fact, we can say that it is in that spirit that we have not only been working on issues like Iran or the Middle East peace process, but most recently, on the crisis in Ukraine. We have discussed this again today. We are determined not only to safeguard and to support independence and the prosperity of that country, but also showing that some kind of unacceptable behavior cannot continue.

We also discussed—linked to this aspect, but not only linked to this issue—the importance of energy, energy security. At the ministerial level, our teams are going to meet already next week to discuss some issues in terms of energy cooperation between Europe and the United States.

A very concrete, probably the most concrete, example of the deepening of our relationship is precisely the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, not only because it is the agreement that we are preparing for the most important economic relationship in the world; every day, there is a trade of 2.2 billion euros, around $2.6 billion, between the two sides of the Atlantic. It's not just because of the huge dimension of this agreement, but because it will be an agreement among equals. Not only are our economies equal in size, but our societies are equal in values.

And I believe that to both our economies, a new impulse of this T–TIP, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, will be very important to give a decisive injection of dyna-

mism and indeed even increase the potential for growth, not only for the big business, but also for small, medium-sized businesses. From every household, there are great potentials in terms of job creation on both sides of the Atlantic if we do it right. And today, we have confirmed that we are determined at the highest level to make it happen and to be a success not only for us, but also for the global economy.

I thank you.

Moderator. Thank you. I will now pass the floor to the President of the United States, Barack Obama.

President Obama. Well, to President Van Rompuy and President Barroso, thank you both for welcoming me here today. Over the years, we've met in Prague, we've met in London—or in Lisbon. We've met at the White House. We've met in Northern Ireland, this week in The Hague. So it's good to finally meet the Presidents of the European Union at the European Union.

As I've said before, Europe is America's closest partner. Europe, including the European Union, is the cornerstone of our engagement around the globe. We are more secure and we are more prosperous—the world is safer and more just—when Europe and America stand as one. And later today I look forward to speaking to the young people from across Europe about how we can sustain the values and ideals that are at the heart of our partnership.

As Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso just mentioned, our work today touched on a full range of issues where we work together. We agreed to step up our efforts to boost growth and job creation on both sides of the Atlantic, and that includes working to conclude a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. And let me add, once we have a trade agreement in place, export licenses for projects for liquefied natural gas destined to Europe would be much easier, something that's obviously relevant in today's geopolitical climate.

We reviewed our negotiations with Iran, which, I believe, give us the opportunity to peacefully resolve the world's concerns with the Iranian nuclear program. We pledged to sustain our support for the effort to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons, even as we work to deliver humanitarian relief to the Syrian people. And we discussed a number of global challenges, including the desire to step up our cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region and our commitment to a new global agreement to combat climate change.

Obviously, much of our focus today was on the situation in Ukraine. Russia's actions in Ukraine aren't just about one country, they're about the kind of Europe—and the kind of world—that we live in. The European project was born from the ashes of two world wars, and the United States has long supported European integration as a force for peace and prosperity. And Europe's progress rests on basic principles, including respect for international law, as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations. That's what Russia violated with its military action against Ukraine.

The United States and Europe stand united on this issue. We're united in our support for Ukraine and for the need to provide economic assistance to help stabilize its economy. We're united in our commitment to Europe's security. We're united in our determination to isolate Russia and impose costs for Russia's actions. Every step of the way, I've coordinated closely with our allies and partners in Europe. And I want to thank Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso for the leadership they've shown during this difficult time.

I want to commend the EU for the important steps taken already to make sure Russia feels the costs of its behavior in Ukraine by implementing visa bans and freezing assets and designating individuals for sanctions, as well as canceling a number of engagements with Russia, and making it clear that if Russia stays on its current course, the consequences for the Russian economy will continue to grow. Of course, all this comes atop the measures and sanctions that the United States and others around the world are imposing on Russia. And taken together, they're the most significant sanctions Russia has faced since the end of the cold war.

Moreover, Russia stands alone. Russia stood alone when trying to defend its actions at the

U.N. Security Council. The 28 members of the European Union are united. The 28 members of NATO are united. Every member of the G–7 has imposed sanctions on Russia, as we announced on Monday, and the G–7 will meet here in Brussels in June without Russia. So if anyone in the Russian leadership thought the world wouldn't care about their actions in Ukraine or that they could drive a wedge between the European Union and the United States, they clearly miscalculated.

As I've said repeatedly and was mentioned by both Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso, there is still a way for Russia to work with Ukraine and the international community to deescalate the situation through diplomacy. That's the only way that the issue will be resolved. If Russia continues on its current course, however, the isolation will deepen. Sanctions will increase, and there will be growing consequences for the Russian economy. And this reflects the enduring commitment to the goal that has brought Europe and the United States together for decades: a Europe that is whole and free and at peace.

In closing, I just want to say to Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso, as you prepare to conclude your tenures later this year, thank you for all the outstanding work that you've been able to do together. We have gone through some very rocky waters. We've persevered through some very difficult economic times. But throughout this process, we've been able to deepen the ties between the European Union and the United States. We've been able to advance the cause of security and human dignity around the world. I'm personally grateful to both of you for your leadership as well as your friendship, and most importantly, for the purposes of our countries that we represent here today, your dedication to the transatlantic relationship. So thank you very much.

Moderator. Thank you for your statement, President Obama. Now there is time for our two questions. [*Laughter*] Thank you for your kind understanding. Please state your name and the media you're representing before addressing your question. Yes, sir. Yes.

International Sanctions Against Russia/Europe-U.S. Energy Cooperation/Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Q. Christian Bermer, German Press Agency, DPA. Good afternoon. I have one question for the Presidents Obama, Barroso, and Van Rompuy. The first is on Russia and Ukraine. Given that the U.S. has less to lose from economic sanctions against Russia, would it be appropriate to envisage support for European allies, for example, in the realm of energy?

Second, you mentioned, all three, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. A lot of citizens have concerns. They fear that standards for environment protection or consumer protection might be at stake. How do you want to convince these citizens? Thank you very much.

President Obama. With respect to sanctions, so far what we've seen is excellent coordination between the United States and Europe. I think on both sides of the Atlantic, there was recognition that in the initial incursion into Crimea, we had to take some very specific steps, and we did: identifying individuals that were, in part, responsible for those actions. When the Russian Government made the decision to annex Crimea, after a referenda that nobody outside of Russia, I think, could take seriously, we then heightened those sanctions, again, in coordination.

What we're now doing is coordinating around the potential for additional, deeper sanctions should Russia move forward and engage in further incursions into Ukraine. And we recognize that in order for Russia to feel the brunt, the impact of these sanctions, that it will have some impact on the global economy as well as on all the countries that are represented here today. And we're mindful that that's going to be different not just between the United States and Europe, but also among different countries inside of Europe, some of whom are more dependent, for example, on energy from Russia than others are.

So we're taking all of this into account. I think energy is obviously a central focus of our efforts, and we have to consider very strongly.

This entire event, I think, has pointed to the need for Europe to look at how it can further diversify its energy sources. And the United States is blessed with some additional energy sources that have been developed in part because of new technologies, and we've already licensed, authorized, the export of as much natural gas each day as Europe uses each day. But it's going into the open market; it's not targeted directly. It's going through private companies who get these licenses, and they make decisions on the world market about where that energy is going to be sold.

The question is whether, through our Energy Ministers and at the highest levels, we're able to find ways in which we can accelerate this process of diversification, and this is something we're very much committed to. We think it would be good for Europe. We think it would be good for the United States. It's not something that can happen overnight, but what I think this entire crisis has pointed to is the need for us to get moving now with a sense of urgency. And our Energy Ministers committed to—are committed to doing that. That was their assignment coming out of the G–7 meeting.

Just on the issue of T–TIP very briefly, we already do enormous trade and there's enormous direct investment between the United States and Europe. We account for a big chunk of the world economy in our economic relations. That's not going to change. I think that our publics both in Europe and the United States have legitimate questions when it comes to trade deals as to whether or not it's going to benefit their countries over the long term, and can we make sure that hard-won victories around consumer protection or environmental protection are preserved, as opposed to weakened. That's something that's of concern in the United States, as it is here.

Here's what I can tell you as these negotiations proceed. I have fought my entire political career and as President to strengthen consumer protections. I have no intention of signing legislation that would weaken those protections. I fought throughout my political career and am fighting as we speak to strengthen environmental protections in the United States, so I have no interest in signing a trade agreement that weakens environmental standards. And so I think that there's been a lot of publicity and speculation about what might be or could be, or is this provision potentially used by corporations to, in some fashion, weaken some of these protections or encroach on sovereign decisions that are made, and I would just caution everybody to wait until they actually see what has been negotiated before they engage in all these speculations.

I think there has generally been suspicion in some quarters around trade. Some of those suspicions are unjustified. Some of them reflect old models of trade agreements that have been updated. But what I can say for certain is, is that because of the trading relationship between the United States and Europe, we've created millions of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic, and growth and prosperity has advanced.

There is a way of doing this right that will help us make sure that we remain at the cutting edge of innovation and growth and development. There are bad ways of doing trade agreements as well, and ultimately, all of these things will have to be subjected to scrutiny in the light of day. But no point in getting excited about potential provisions in trade agreements that haven't been drafted yet. There will be plenty of time to criticize trade agreements when they're actually put before the public. But I guarantee you, we're going to be working hard to make sure that environmental protections, consumer protections that are already in place, that those are strengthened.

And I shared with President Van Rompuy and Barroso the fact that part of the suspicion about trade is whether globalization is benefiting everybody as opposed to just those at the top and some small segments of our economies or large corporations as opposed to small and medium-sized businesses. I think it is important for us as leaders to ensure that trade is helping folks at the bottom and folks in the middle and broad-based prosperity, not just a few elites. And that's the test that I'm going to apply in whether or not it makes sense for us to

move forward in a trade deal. I'm confident we can actually shape a trade deal that accomplishes those things.

President Van Rompuy. Just on Ukraine, and I guess that the President of the European Commission will speak on the T–TIP. On Ukraine, we coordinated our first tiers of sanctions, hitting individuals by travel bans and by asset freeze. And also, on the political side, we suspended the preparatory work for the G–8 meeting, and we are now organizing a G–7 meeting, as mentioned already, that will take here—place in Brussels.

And then, from the European side, we said in the statement of the European Council that if further steps were taken by Russia to destabilize the situation in Ukraine, we will take economic sanctions. And we tasked the Commission to prepare a broad range of sanctions in all kinds of areas. Of course, we have to coordinate among our member states. They are not all in the same position as far as trade, energy, financial services is concerned. So we have to coordinate among us, and we have, of course, to coordinate with the United States.

But let me say also that sanctions are not a punishment; sanctions are not a retaliation. Sanctions are a positive incentive to seek a diplomatic, a political solution, while respecting, of course, international law. So sanctions are in itself—they are not an aim in itself. But we are working also on stabilizing the situation in Ukraine—stabilizing politically, stabilizing economically, stabilizing financially—because that is the best answer. It's the best answer to strengthen Ukraine, to make it a strong currency instead of a weak currency.

And that's why we signed the association agreement with Ukraine. That's why we will provide macrofinancial help to Ukraine if they agree, of course, on reforms with the International Monetary Fund. That's why, also, unilaterally, we are removing—or will remove customs duties. So there's a broad range of initiatives we are taking to stabilize the country Ukraine besides the actions that we can take as far as sanctions are concerned.

President Barroso. Still on this issue, I believe that all this talk about who is doing more on sanctions, the United States or Europe, is really sterile and useless, first of all, because we are united, as we have shown, taking very important decisions like the cancellation of our European Union-Russia summit, are now together; the cancellation of the G–8 summit in Sochi; and indeed the organization of the G–7 meeting here in Brussels.

It's true what you said that, in fact, the European economy is much more linked to Russia, and Russia to the European Union, than the United States; and that, in fact, Russians are much more looking to Europe also because they are traveling more here, and so on. That's precisely why one measure in Europe that may appear not so ambitious as an American one has at least the same effect, because our trade with Russia is comparable with what the United States have with Japan, for instance.

So we are preparing the necessary measures in a determined way, of course, consulting with our American partners and friends. What is important, as I just said, is that we make sure that unacceptable actions will bear very serious consequences. And so far, this has been a message that has been passed clearly to the Russian leadership.

And once again, the problem is not a competition between the United States and Europe about sanctions. The problem is one that exists between Russia and the international community. I think the 21st century, it's just not acceptable that one big power takes part of another sovereign country, recognized as independent by the United Nations. This is the real problem, not how far are going the Americans or the Europeans Unions in their respective instruments in terms of measures.

On T–TIP, I think President Obama already said everything. Just one point I want to reassure you: The European Commission are negotiating on behalf of all 28 member states. We have a clear mandate; we are going to respect it fully. And of course, our mandate does not allow for any kind of, let's say, weakening of our standards.

The Americans have some very high standards as well. It's true that sometimes in the regulatory matters, we don't have exactly the

same position. That's why when it's not possible to have regulatory convergence, I think we should try to accept some mechanisms of mutual recognition. Because it's true that today the trade between Europe and the United States is already very much liberalized. Tariffs are relatively low compared with other parts of the world. We are trying to get that even lower, both Americans and Europeans, and I'm sure we are going to get it.

But it is also important to give us new impulse for growth to eliminate some nontariff barriers. And some of these nontariff barriers are in the regulatory field. So I'm sure we can do it right. I have nothing to add to what President Obama said. But in fact, let's work for what can be a very transformative instrument, not only for the benefit, of course, of the European citizens and American people, but also, hopefully, for a more open global trade system.

Moderator. Thank you. Yes, sir.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Europe-U.S. Energy Cooperation

Q. Thank you. Jeff Mason from Reuters. Mr. President, you're going to NATO later this afternoon. What more does NATO need to do to reassure Russia's worried neighbors? And do you think the crisis right now in that region will make it more or less likely that NATO will expand to include Ukraine and Georgia?

And for Presidents Van Rompuy and President Barroso, on energy, what more do you expect the United States to do to help the European Union reduce its dependence on Russian oil? And are you concerned that obstacles in Congress will prevent you from achieving your goals on trade and, as we saw with a vote on the IMF yesterday, also on Ukraine? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, I'm looking forward to having my meeting with Secretary General Rasmussen, whose term is expiring, and I have to say has provided outstanding leadership to NATO on a whole range of issues. So let me take an opportunity now, without him being here, to compliment him on doing just an outstanding job.

As I said yesterday at a press conference in The Hague, our commitment to NATO is the cornerstone, the most important element of U.S. national security, as well as European security. And so at the core of NATO is our article 5 commitments to collective defense.

When I first came into office, one of the things that I said to all the NATO members sitting around the table was that there's no junior NATO members versus senior NATO members. Obviously, there are big countries and there are small countries in NATO, but when it comes to the commitment to collective defense, everybody is in the same footing. It does mean that we have to make sure that we have put together very real contingency plans for every one of these members, including those who came in out of Central and Eastern Europe. And over the last several years, we have worked up a number of these contingency plans.

When we meet—when the ministers meet in April—one of the things that I have suggested to the heads of state and government who are NATO members is that we examine those plans to make sure that they're updated, that we do more to ensure that a regular NATO presence among some of these states that may feel vulnerable is executed. I think there are ways that we can do that that can be accommodated by our existing assets.

But one of the things that I've also said in the past and will repeat again—and I think Secretary General Rasmussen agrees with me here—is that if we've got collective defense, it means that everybody has got to chip in. And I have had some concerns about a diminished level of defense spending among some of our partners in NATO, not all, but many. The trend lines have been going down. That's understandable when you have an economic crisis and financial crisis and many countries are going through fiscal consolidation. But the situation in Ukraine reminds us that our freedom isn't free, and we've got to be willing to pay for the assets, the personnel, the training that's required to make sure that we have a credible NATO force and an effective deterrent force.

So one of the things that I think, medium and long term, we'll have to examine is whether everybody is chipping in. And this can't just

be a U.S. exercise or a British exercise or one country's efforts. Everybody is going to have to make sure that they are engaged and involved. And I think that will help build more confidence among some of those border states.

One last thing I just want to say about energy—I also mentioned this to President Van Rompuy and President Barroso—I think it is useful for Europe to look at its own energy assets, as well as how the United States can supply additional energy assets. Because I—the truth of the matter is, is that just as there's no easy, free, simple way to defend ourselves, there's no perfect, free, ideal, cheap energy sources. Every possible energy source has some inconveniences or downsides.

And I think that Europe collectively is going to need to examine, in light of what's happened, their energy policies to find are there additional ways that they can diversify and accelerate energy independence. The United States as a source of energy is one possibility, and we've been blessed by some incredible resources. But we're also making choices and taking on some of the difficulties and challenges of energy development, and Europe is going to have to go through some of those same conversations as well.

Ukraine/Republic of Georgia/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. And NATO expansion to Georgia and Ukraine?

President Obama. Well, I think that neither Ukraine or Georgia are currently on a path to NATO membership, and there has not been any immediate plans for expansion of NATO's membership. I know that Russia has—at least on background—has suggested that one of the reasons they've been concerned about Ukraine was potential NATO membership. On the other hand, part of the reason that the Ukraine has not formally applied for NATO membership is because of its complex relationship with Russia. I don't think that's going to change anytime soon, obviously.

So as I said yesterday, we have a commitment that includes a military commitment to our NATO members. For nonmembers, we want to support those countries based on our belief in principles and ideals that are important not just in Europe, but around the world, including territorial integrity and sovereignty. And so we're going to do everything we can to support Ukraine in its elections, its economy, and to continue to try to isolate Russia in response to the actions that it's taken. But I think it would be unrealistic to think that the Ukrainian people themselves have made a decision about that, much less the complex process that's required in order to actually become a NATO member.

President Barroso. About energy, of course, as President Obama just said, we in Europe have to solve some of our problems. We have been working on that. For instance, we have opened now a new gas route, the first time ever that we'll have gas from Eastern part of Europe not coming from Russia. It will be from Azerbaijan, the southern corridor. We have made progress in many areas of the internal market, interconnections, reverse flows, and so on and so forth. We are working on that.

But it's certainly good news that United States have this policy of putting gas from shale gas in the international market, because it's a blessing for the United States, as President Obama just said, but I would say it's also a blessing for the world, because countries like European countries and others would be less dependent on energy coming from, let's say, difficult spots. And we know about these licenses. We have, of course, welcomed the remarks that President Obama just confirmed now that with the FTA, this is going to be much easier than with the licenses that are already being given to companies around the world to trade.

And most importantly, also we have decided to increase our cooperation in the field of energy. Already next week, under the chairmanship of John Kerry and Cathy Ashton, there will be the ministers responsible for energy meeting to see what also can be done innovative in this field.

But Europe is working very decisively to reduce its energy dependency. And that's one of the reasons why the European Commission

have been pushing for so many years, as you know, to achieve the internal market, to develop the interconnections, and to have a true European energy policy. And I believe now among leaders—we have discussed this and the chairmanship of Herman Van Rompuy in the last European Council—there is a great awareness and commitment of this. This was a wakeup call—very, very strong—for Europe to go forward in terms of the energy integration and also a policy for energy security.

Q. But would you like the U.S. to export more oil and gas?

President Barroso. The U.S., they are already exporting more. But for that point of view, it's better for President Obama to give you the elements. He already informed us in the G–7 meeting and just today that there are licenses already given that, in fact, are equivalent to the supply of gas to Europe, but they are traded in the global market. We certainly don't expect that gas to be earmarked for any kind of specific market. We are believers in free trade. We don't want that to be the case. It's good news, and it's up to the American President to confirm it, but I think I can say it here that there is potential still—that's what the President just told us—even to increase more of these licenses. So this is certainly good news. But we are not relying just on that. We have to do also our homework here in the European Union.

Moderator. Okay. Thank you for your attention.

President Obama. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:42 p.m. at the Council of the European Union. In his remarks, President Van Rompuy referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Victorovich Lavrov of Russia; and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Andriy Deshchytsya of Ukraine. He also referred to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). President Barroso referred to Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Brussels, Belgium
March 26, 2014

President Obama. Well, let me just say how much I appreciate the opportunity once again to meet with Secretary General Rasmussen. I have to say that in the entire time that he has served in this position he has done an outstanding job. His leadership, his vision, his clarity, and his political skills—because there are a lot of NATO members—have all been on display, and as a consequence, the transatlantic alliance is stronger, more robust than it was without him. And so we're very grateful for his extraordinary work.

At a time when the situation in Ukraine, I think, has focused everyone's attention on the importance of the transatlantic relationships, we spent most of our discussion reaffirming the importance of NATO, that it is the bedrock of America's security as well as European security. We share the view that Russia's illegal incursion into Ukraine and the violations of territorial integrity and sovereignty have to be condemned, but it also reminds us that the NATO commitments that we've made under article 5 are something that are not just items on a piece of paper, but are critically important to all NATO members. And we have to have the resources and preparation to make sure that every member of NATO feels confident in article 5's effect.

We've already made a series of decisions to help underscore the importance of NATO and collective defense in the wake of what has happened in Ukraine. There will be a ministerial summit coming up, at which I have asked the United States delegation to work cooperatively with the Secretary General's office and evaluate all the additional steps that we might take

in order to bolster that confidence among all NATO members.

And we also talked about a project that the Secretary General has been working on for quite some time to continue to develop the joint capabilities of NATO. And I think that at this moment, as I said at the press conference earlier today, both the United States and Europe are going to have to make sure that we are stepping up our game and making the contributions that are required in order for us to give full effect to our NATO obligations.

One of the things that I've been very proud of in working with Secretary Rasmussen is the degree of unanimity that he has been able to forge on a whole range of issues. One of his biggest jobs has been dealing with the situation in Afghanistan as we end our combat mission in Afghanistan and we transition to a train-and-advise situation. He has helped to oversee that process. We do not yet have a bilateral security agreement that fully clarifies what the nature of our mission will be post-2014, but working together, we're confident that we can prepare for any eventuality and that we can continue to maintain both the counterterrorism commitments as well as the commitments to help develop an Afghan security force that can ensure that Afghanistan does not end up being, once again, a safe haven for terrorism and that it can be a stable and secure country that serves the prosperity and the security of the Afghan people.

So we—finally, we touched on the continued interest that NATO has in partnering with other countries and helping them to train and develop their capacities for security. The more that we have effective partners, the greater reach that we have, and I think Anders has been very effective and visionary in suggesting approaches to all NATO members about how we can extend our reach in that fashion.

So overall, with a very busy agenda and a very full plate, General—Secretary General Rasmussen has done an outstanding job. He's been a great partner to us. He's going to be transitioning, but he will have left his mark not just on NATO, but I think on the long-term security of both his native Europe as well as the United States of America, and for that, we're very grateful.

Secretary General Rasmussen. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for those very kind words. I'm very grateful for your support throughout my tenure as Secretary General, and I look forward to working with you to prepare a substantive summit in Wales in September.

I thank you very much for your strong leadership and for your steadfast commitment to our alliance. The transatlantic bond between North America and Europe is the bedrock of security in Europe and in North America. We—I really appreciate your reaffirmation of the commitment of the United States to our shared defense and security, and I welcome the steps that the United States has taken in response to Russia's reckless and illegal military actions in Ukraine.

Clearly, collective defense of our allies is a core task for NATO, and I join you in your call for additional measures to enhance our collective defense, including updated and further developed defense plans, enhanced exercises, appropriate deployments. Our commitment to the defense of our allies is unbreakable, and at the same time, we are firm in our support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will intensify our military cooperation with the Ukraine, and—including helping the Ukrainians to modernize their armed forces.

As we prepare for our next summit in Wales later this year, we will review the viability of our relationship with Russia, we will enhance cooperation with our partners, we will further strengthen our collective defense, and we will reinforce the transatlantic bond. NATO is a force for peace, but also unmatched militarily. We do not seek confrontation, but we will not waver if challenged. And our alliance is more than just a military alliance. We are a community of values that also brings hope for all people seeking freedom and peace.

Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:33 p.m. at The Hotel.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Immigration Reform Legislation
March 26, 2014

Last year, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate came together to pass a common-sense bill to fix our broken immigration system, a bill that would grow our economy, shrink our deficits, and reward businesses and workers that play by the rules. But so far, Republicans in the House have refused to allow meaningful immigration reform legislation to even come up for a vote.

That's why today I applaud the efforts of Democrats in the House to give immigration reform the yes-or-no vote it deserves. Like the Senate bill, the House bill would strengthen our borders, modernize our legal immigration system, and keep more families together. It would make sure everyone plays by the same rules by providing a pathway to earned citizenship for those who are living in the shadows. And according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, it would grow our economy and reduce our deficits by $900 billion over the next 20 years.

Immigration reform is the right thing to do for our economy, our security, and our future. A vast majority of the American people agree. The only thing standing in the way is the unwillingness of Republicans in Congress to catch up with the rest of the country. And I want to thank the leaders in Congress who are doing their part to move us forward.

Statement on the Connecticut Legislature's Passage of Legislation To Raise the Minimum Wage
March 26, 2014

Today the Connecticut Legislature took an important step towards raising the State minimum wage to $10.10 an hour and giving more Connecticut workers the raise they deserve. When I visited Connecticut earlier this month, I was joined by Governor Malloy and three of his fellow New England Governors, who represent just a few of the many States, cities, and counties across our country working to raise their minimum wages. I support these efforts, and I commend Governor Malloy for his leadership. But to truly make sure our economy rewards the hard work of every American, Congress must act. I hope Members of Congress, Governors, State legislators, and business leaders across our country will follow Connecticut's lead to help ensure that no American who works full time has to raise a family in poverty and that every American who works hard has the chance to get ahead.

NOTE: The statement referred to Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee of Rhode Island; Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts; and Gov. Peter E. Shumlin of Vermont.

Joint Statement by the United States and the European Union
March 26, 2014

1. We, the leaders of the European Union and the United States, met today in Brussels to reaffirm our *strong partnership.* We reaffirmed our shared values of democracy, individual freedom, the rule of law and human rights, and a common commitment to open societies and economies. Starting from those values, the European Union and the United States work together every day to address issues of vital interest and importance to our citizens and the world. We strive to create jobs and sustainable growth through sound

economic policies. We seek a landmark Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership to build our common prosperity. We undertake joint efforts to build security and stability around the globe and to tackle pressing global challenges like climate change. Today, we took stock of our achievements, set priorities and charted the way ahead for a stronger transatlantic relationship, and rededicated ourselves to building a safer, more prosperous world for future generations.

2. Today in Ukraine, the basic principles of international law and security in the 21st century are being challenged. The EU and the United States support the Ukrainian people and their right to choose their own future and remain committed to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of *Ukraine.* We strongly condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea to Russia and will not recognise it. We urge Russia to engage in a meaningful dialogue with Ukraine with a view to finding a political solution. Further steps by Russia to destabilise the situation in Ukraine would lead to additional and far reaching consequences for the EU's and United States' relations with Russia in a broad range of economic areas. The EU and the United States stand by the Ukrainian government in its efforts to stabilise Ukraine and undertake reforms, including through assistance. We welcome the Ukrainian government's commitment to ensure that governmental structures are inclusive and reflect regional diversity and to provide full protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

3. Reinforcing *economic growth* and *job creation* remains central. The EU and the United States have taken important steps to stabilize financial conditions and overcome the crisis. The EU remains committed to building a deep and genuine economic and monetary union, including a banking union on which significant progress has already been made. Determined action by the EU and the United States is vital to support the recovery in the short run and to promote sustainable and balanced growth, to boost competiveness and to reduce unemployment, especially of young people.

4. We commit to continue our efforts through the *G–20 to promote strong, sustainable and balanced growth across the global economy* by developing comprehensive growth strategies for the Brisbane Summit**.** We aim at implementing the G–20 commitments to create a more stable financial system. Fiscal sustainability in advanced economies remains critical for a stronger and sustainable recovery. We also welcome the ambitious G–20 agenda to fight tax evasion.

5. Today we reaffirmed our commitment to conclude expeditiously a comprehensive and ambitious *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)* that will strengthen an economic partnership that already accounts for nearly half of global output and supports three-quarters of a trillion euros in bilateral trade, and almost 3 trillion euros in investment, and 13 million jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. We commit ourselves to conducting these negotiations with clarity and in a manner that builds support among our publics. The United States and the EU continue to share the same goals spelled out in the February 2013 Final Report of the High Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth. These goals include expanding access to each other's markets for goods, services, investment, and procurement; increasing regulatory compatibility while maintaining the high levels of health, safety, labour and environmental protection our citizens expect of us; and formulating joint approaches to rules that address global trade challenges of common concern. A high-standard TTIP agreement will make us more competitive globally, and boost economic and jobs growth, including for small and medium-sized enterprises.

6. Even as we undertake this joint endeavour, we underscore the importance of the *World Trade Organization* and the timely implementation of the outcome of the 9th Ministerial Conference in December 2013, including the Trade Facilitation Agreement. We call on other negotiating partners to contribute to the prompt conclusion of a balanced and commercially significant expansion of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) by offering

commitments reflecting the high level of ambition shown by the EU and the US. We also reaffirm our commitment to achieving an ambitious Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA), which should further advance services liberalisation and regulatory disciplines.

7. Sustainable economic growth will only be possible if we tackle *climate change*, which is also a risk to global security. We therefore reaffirm our strong determination to work towards the adoption in Paris in 2015 of a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties, to strengthen the multilateral, rules-based regime. The 2015 agreement must be consistent with science and with the goal of limiting the global temperature increase to below 2°C, and should therefore include ambitious mitigation contributions, notably from the world's major economies and other significant emitters. We are implementing our existing pledges and preparing new mitigation contributions for the first quarter of 2015, mindful of the importance of ensuring that mitigation contributions are transparent, quantifiable, verifiable and ambitious. The EU and the United States demonstrate leadership and are intensifying their cooperation, including: phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, phasing down the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) under the Montreal Protocol, in promoting sustainable energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy**,** fighting deforestation, and mobilizing private and public finance. We are committed to ambitious domestic action to limit HFC use and emissions.

8. Together with several other WTO members, we have pledged to prepare the launch of WTO negotiations on *liberalising trade in environmental goods*, which will make an important contribution to tackling key environmental challenges as part of our broader agenda to address green growth, climate change and sustainable development. We are convinced this can make a real contribution to both the global trading system and the fight against climate change, and can complement our bilateral trade talks.

9. *Energy* is a key component in the transition to a competitive low-carbon economy and achieving long-term sustainable economic development. The EU-US Energy Council fosters cooperation on energy security, regulatory frameworks that encourage the efficient and sustainable use of energy, and joint research priorities that promote safe and sustainable energy technologies. The situation in Ukraine proves the need to reinforce energy security in Europe and we are considering new collaborative efforts to achieve this goal. We welcome the prospect of U.S. LNG exports in the future since additional global supplies will benefit Europe and other strategic partners. We agree on the importance of redoubling transatlantic efforts to support European energy security to further diversify energy sources and suppliers and to allow for reverse natural gas flows to Ukraine from its EU neighbours. We are working together to foster competitive, transparent, secure and sustainable international energy markets. We remain committed to close cooperation on energy research and innovation in areas including energy efficiency, smart and resilient energy grids and storage, advanced materials including critical materials for safe and sustainable energy supply, nuclear energy and interoperability of standards for electric vehicle and smart grid technologies. This commitment extends to the promotion of related policies that encourage commercial deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies, notably in power generation and transportation. We agree to strengthen knowledge-sharing on carbon capture and storage, and on the sustainable development of unconventional energy resources.

10. We commit to expand cooperation in *research, innovation and new emerging technologies,* and protection of intellectual property rights as strong drivers for increased trade and future economic growth. Our collaboration in the *space domain* also contributes to growth and global security, including on an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. We will combine wherever possible our efforts as we did in the Transatlantic Ocean Research Alliance and through the GPS/Galileo

agreement. The Transatlantic Economic Council will continue its work to improve cooperation in emerging sectors, specifically e-mobility, e-health and new activities under the Innovation Action Partnership.

11. We reaffirm our commitment to complete secure *visa-free travel* arrangements between the United States and all EU Member States as soon as possible and consistent with applicable domestic legislation.

12. The transatlantic digital economy is integral to our economic growth, trade and innovation. Cross border data flows are critical to our economic vitality, and to our law enforcement and counterterrorism efforts. We affirm the need to promote *data protection, privacy and free speech in the digital era* while ensuring the *security* of our citizens. This is essential for trust in the online environment.

13. We have made considerable progress on a wide range of transnational security issues. We *cooperate against terrorism* in accordance with respect for human rights. Agreements such as the Passenger Name Record and Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme that prevent terrorism while respecting privacy are critical tools in our transatlantic cooperation. We will strengthen our coordination efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. We will continue looking for appropriate mechanisms to counter the threats posed by fighters departing to Syria and other unstable regions, who return home where they may recruit new fighters, plan and conduct terrorist operations. We also work to address the threats posed by activities of groups contributing to instability in these regions. We welcome our increasingly close cooperation in building the capacity of partner countries to counter terrorism and violent extremism within a framework of rule of law, particularly in the Sahel, Maghreb, Horn of Africa region and Pakistan. We pledge to deepen and broaden this cooperation through the United Nations, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and other relevant channels. We have also decided to expedite and enhance cooperation on threats directly affecting the security of EU and US diplomatic staff and facilities abroad.

14. *Data protection and privacy* are to remain an important part of our dialogue. We recall the steps already taken, including the EU-U.S. ad hoc Working Group, and take note of the European Commission Communication of 27 November 2013 and President Obama's speech and Policy Directive of 17 January 2014. We will take further steps in this regard. We are committed to expedite negotiations of a meaningful and comprehensive data protection umbrella agreement for data exchanges in the field of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, including terrorism. We reaffirm our commitment in these negotiations to work to resolve the remaining issues, including judicial redress. By ensuring a high level of protection of personal data for citizens on both sides of the Atlantic, this agreement will facilitate transfers of data in this area. The United States and the EU will also boost effectiveness of the Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement—a key channel of cooperation in the digital era. In addition, we are committed to strengthening the Safe Harbour Framework in a comprehensive manner by summer 2014, to ensure data protection and enable trade through increased transparency, effective enforcement and legal certainty when data is transferred for commercial purposes.

15. The Internet has become a key global infrastructure. We share a commitment to a *universal, open, secure, and reliable Internet*, based on an inclusive, effective, and transparent multi-stakeholder model of governance. As such, we reaffirm that human rights apply equally online and offline, and we endeavour to strengthen and improve this model while working towards the further globalisation of core Internet institutions with the full involvement of all stakeholders. We look forward to the transition of key Internet domain name functions to the global multi-stakeholder community based on an acceptable proposal that has the community's broad support. We acknowledge the good expert-level cooperation developed in the framework of the EU-US Working Group on Cyber Security and Cybercrime. We commend the political success of our joint initiative to launch a Global Alliance

against Child Sexual Abuse Online, as the EU prepares to hand over the lead to the United States, and we decide to tackle jointly the issue of transnational child sex offenders. We reiterate our support for the Budapest Convention on cybercrime, and encourage its ratification and implementation. Building on all these achievements and guided by shared values, we have today decided to launch a comprehensive EU-US cyber dialogue to strengthen and further our cooperation including on various cyber-related foreign policy issues.

16. The EU and the United States have significantly strengthened and intensified their *cooperation on foreign and security policy*. We will continue jointly to support the promotion, protection and observance of human rights and the rule of law, democratic transition, inclusive political processes, economic modernisation and social inclusion around the globe.

17. In the *Western Balkans*, and with the aim of enhancing regional stability, the EU facilitated the *Belgrade-Pristina dialogue,* leading to progress in the normalisation of relations, notably thanks to the April 2013 agreement. We share our deep concern at the current political and economic stalemate in *Bosnia and Herzegovina* and stand ready to assist the country in bringing it closer to European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

18. We support the ongoing process of political association and economic integration of interested *Eastern Partnership* countries with the EU, an expression of the partner countries' free choice. The Association Agreements, including their Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, have the potential to support far-reaching political and socio-economic reforms leading to societies strongly rooted in European values and principles and to the creation of an economic area that can contribute to sustainable growth and jobs, thereby enhancing stability in the region. We support the democratic path of the Eastern European partners, the resolution of protracted conflicts and fostering economic modernisation, notably with regard to *Georgia* and the *Republic of Moldova,* which are moving closer to signing their respective Association Agreements with the EU.

19. In the EU's *southern neighbourhood,* we are coordinating closely to assist countries in transition in *North Africa,* including the worrying situation in *Egypt*. We welcome the adoption of a new constitution respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms in *Tunisia*, following an inclusive national dialogue. As agreed earlier this month in Rome, we also aim to intensify coordinated assistance to *Libya,* a country facing significant challenges to its democratic transition and stability.

20. We have undertaken joint intensive diplomatic efforts through the E3/EU+3 to seek a negotiated solution that resolves the international community's concerns regarding the *Iranian nuclear programme.* The strong and credible efforts of the E3/EU+3 that resulted in agreement last November on a Joint Plan of Action, are widely supported by the international community. Efforts must now focus on producing a comprehensive and final settlement. The E3/EU+3 talks in February in Vienna resulted in an understanding on the key issues that need to be resolved, and in a timetable for negotiations over the next few months. We will continue to make every effort to ensure a successful outcome. We also jointly urge Iran to improve its human rights situation and to work more closely with the United Nations and international community to this end.

21. We fully support ongoing efforts to reach a peace agreement in the *Middle East.* We stand ready to contribute substantially to ensure its implementation and sustainability. The EU has offered an unprecedented package of political, economic and security support to the Palestinians and Israelis in the context of a final status agreement. The current negotiations present a unique opportunity to achieve a two state solution to the conflict; this chance must not be missed. But for the negotiations to succeed, actions that undermine them and diminish the trust between the negotiation partners must be avoided and both sides must take bold decisions to reach a compromise.

22. The Geneva negotiation process is crucial for achieving a genuine political transition in *Syria*. The onus is on the Syrian regime to engage constructively with the process and

take part in meaningful negotiations towards political transition as set out in the Geneva Communique. Any elections in Syria should only take place within this framework. We will continue promoting efforts to alleviate the suffering of civilians; including the 6.5 million people displaced, more than half of them children, at risk of becoming a lost generation. We commend Syria's neighbours for hosting 2.5 million refugees and recall the need to maintain sufficient assistance. We demand all parties, in particular the Syrian regime, allow unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid and medical care country-wide and across borders and including areas under siege, in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 2139. We are concerned that there are delays in the transfer process of chemical weapons out of Syria, and we urge Syria to comply with its obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 2118 and the decisions of the OPCW Executive Council to verifiably eliminate its chemical weapons program in the shortest time possible. We will also continue, through the UN human rights bodies, to press for an end to and accountability for the grave human rights abuses and serious violations of international humanitarian law in Syria.

23. We stress the importance of the upcoming elections as an historic opportunity to further enhance democratic transition, stabilisation and development in *Afghanistan*, and recall the need to protect human rights gains, in particular for women and girls, and to conclude solid security arrangements, including the Bilateral Security Agreement. Continued progress on the commitments of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework will be needed to maintain high levels of international support after 2014. We also recall the importance of regional cooperation, notably the Heart of Asia initiative and the New Silk Road, as a means to promote security, stability and development in the region, and agreed to discuss this also in the context of our dialogue on Central Asia.

24. We are deepening our cooperation in the *Asia-Pacific* region to support efforts to preserve peace, ensure stability, and promote prosperity. We work together to encourage and support democratic and economic transformation, including in Myanmar/Burma. We support ASEAN and its central role in establishing strong and effective multilateral security structures, and we will continue to play an active and constructive role in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). We underline our support for a regional architecture that is supported by shared rules and norms and that encourages cooperation, addresses shared concerns, and helps resolve disputes peacefully. In this context, we recognise the EU's experience in regional integration and institution building, and welcome greater EU engagement with the region's institutions and fora.

25. Mindful that a maritime regime based on international law has contributed to the region's impressive economic growth, we reaffirm our commitment to the freedom of navigation and lawful uses of the sea. We call on parties to avoid taking unilateral action to change the status quo and increase tensions in the region. In the East China Sea, we support calls for diplomacy and crisis management procedures in order to avoid miscalculations or accidents. In the South China Sea, we urge ASEAN and China to accelerate progress on a meaningful code of conduct. We reiterate our calls on all parties to take confidence building measures and to settle conflicts without threat or use of force and by diplomatic means in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS.

26. We call on the *DPRK* to comply fully, unconditionally, and without delay with its denuclearization commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks and its international obligations, including as set out in relevant UN Security Council Resolutions in order to work towards lasting peace and security. We demand that the DPRK abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner and return to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards. We also remain gravely concerned with the human rights and humanitarian situation in the DPRK. While we welcome the meetings of separated families, which

should continue, and inter-Korean high-level meetings, we urge the DPRK to address all the concerns of the international community, including over its systematic, widespread, and grave human rights violations, as recently documented by the UN Commission of Inquiry.

27. We commit to work with all partners to agree an ambitious post-2015 *development agenda,* anchored in a single set of clear, measurable, and universally applicable goals. That agenda should address the inter-linked challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development, including climate change; deliver on the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals; invest in health, food security, nutrition and education; advance the sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable energy and water management, and inclusive and sustainable growth; promote peaceful and safe societies, open and accountable governance, the rule of law, gender equality and empowerment of women, girls and persons of disabilities, and human rights for all; and revitalize a global partnership for development. We underscore the central imperative of poverty eradication and sustainable development in the interrelated economic, social and environmental dimensions. We are committed to freeing humanity from poverty and hunger as a matter of urgency.

28. Building on the progress made through the *EU-U.S. Development Dialogue,* we will continue to utilize this forum to pursue cooperation and a division of labour to build resilience and address food insecurity. Attention should also be given to universal access to sustainable energy in Africa and other underserved regions, through public and private investment, and appropriate investment security. We agree to coordinate further our support to the UN Energy for All initiative and our interventions under the United States' Power Africa initiative and the Africa-EU Energy Partnership, with a view to formalizing this collaboration by the creation of a partnership framework.

29. We are the world's two largest humanitarian donors; providing over 60% of all *humanitarian aid* worldwide. When we join forces, we maximize our impact, leading to real improvements in the lives of millions of people affected by humanitarian crises, including refugees and other vulnerable persons worldwide. Together, we have used our diplomatic influence to support humanitarian agencies, to strengthen UN led coordination and safely reach millions of people in need of assistance in situations of natural disasters and in Syria, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar/Burma, the Central African Republic, and other places where armed groups have blocked or hampered access. We commit to continue this robust, close, and frequent coordination in areas facing humanitarian crises around the world.

30. *Security and development* are inextricably linked, we will continue to deepen our dialogue in this regard to frame and undertake complementary and mutually reinforcing action. Working together and with other international, regional and local partners, the EU and the United States strive to put this approach into practice through early warning and prevention, crisis response and management, to early recovery, stabilisation and peacebuilding, in order to help countries to get back on track towards sustainable long-term development.

31. We welcome the EU's efforts to strengthen its *Common Security and Defence Policy,* particularly the goals articulated at the December 2013 European Council for the EU to contribute more effectively to peace and security, including by working together with key partners such as the United Nations, the United States and NATO, and to ensure the necessary means and a sufficient level of investment to meet the challenges of the future. We will continue working to strengthen fully *EU-NATO cooperation,* especially in early consultations on crises and emerging security challenges such as maritime, energy, and cyber security, as well as mutual reinforcement in developing Allies' and Member States' capabilities. Strong, coherent and mutually beneficial cooperation between the EU and NATO, in compliance with the decision-making autonomy and procedures of each, remains as

important as ever, particularly in a time of constrained budgets.

32. We also committed to enhancing *practical EU-U.S. security and crisis response management* cooperation, particularly in addressing crises in Africa. We work there together with partner states and organisations such as the African Union and the United Nations in diplomatic, political, development, economic, and other areas to promote peace and security. We have worked together in training and supporting the Somali National Security Forces. Naval forces of the United States, NATO, and EU coordinate closely within the international efforts to fight piracy off the Horn of Africa, and the EU has now succeeded the United States as Chair of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia for 2014. The United States and EU remain deeply concerned about the situations in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, and are supporting African and UN efforts to stabilize these countries. We also agreed that coordination of our efforts across the Sahel and in the Gulf of Guinea and the Great Lakes regions will be important to address the trans-national issues those regions face. Furthermore, we will work respectively with partner states and organizations to assist African partners in building the institutional capacity for conflict management, prevention and peacekeeping, through training and other measures designed to strengthen the resilience of the security sector.

33. We reaffirm our joint commitments on *non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control.* We stress the importance of compliance with, and strengthening implementation of, the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and will work closely together on preparations for the 2015 NPT Review Conference and the 2016 BWC Review Conference. We underscore the importance of the timely entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and support to the CTBTO Preparatory Commission. We recall our continued interest in the commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and look forward to the work of the United Nations Group of Government Experts established to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to such a treaty. We welcome implementation of the New START Treaty, look forward to next steps, and encourage the P5 to continue their important dialogue. We are determined to promote IAEA's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol as the universally accepted Safeguards standard. We will work together to achieve the highest standards of safety for peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and of nuclear materials security, including as highlighted at the March 2014 Nuclear Security Summit. We will also work together to promote the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in 2014.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks to European Youth in Brussels, Belgium
March 26, 2014

Thank you. Please, please have a seat. Good evening. *Goede avond. Bonsoir. Guten abend.* Thank you, Laura, for that remarkable introduction on—before she came out she told me not to be nervous. [*Laughter*] And I can only imagine—I think her father is in the audience, and I can only imagine how proud he is of her. We're grateful for her work, but she's also reminding us that our future will be defined by young people like her.

Your Majesties, Mr. Prime Minister, and the people of Belgium: On behalf of the American people, we are grateful for your friendship. We stand together as inseparable allies, and I

thank you for your wonderful hospitality. I have to admit, it is easy to love a country famous for chocolate and beer. [*Laughter*]

Leaders and dignitaries of the European Union, representatives of our NATO alliance, distinguished guests: We meet here at a moment of testing for Europe and the United States and for the international order that we have worked for generations to build.

Throughout human history, societies have grappled with fundamental questions of how to organize themselves, the proper relationship between the individual and the state, the best means to resolve inevitable conflicts between states. And it was here in Europe, through centuries of struggle—through war and Enlightenment, repression and revolution—that a particular set of ideals began to emerge: the belief that, through conscience and free will, each of us has the right to live as we choose; the belief that power is derived from the consent of the governed and that laws and institutions should be established to protect that understanding. And those ideas eventually inspired a band of colonialists across an ocean, and they wrote them into the founding documents that still guide America today, including the simple truth that all men—and women—are created equal.

But those ideals have also been tested, here in Europe and around the world. Those ideals have often been threatened by an older, more traditional view of power. This alternative vision argues that ordinary men and women are too small-minded to govern their own affairs, that order and progress can only come when individuals surrender their rights to an all-powerful sovereign. Often, this alternative vision roots itself in the notion that, by virtue of race or faith or ethnicity, some are inherently superior to others, and that individual identity must be defined by "us" versus "them," or that national greatness must flow not by what a people stand for, but what they are against.

In so many ways, the history of Europe in the 20th century represented the ongoing clash of these two sets of ideas, both within nations and among nations. The advance of industry and technology outpaced our ability to resolve our differences peacefully, and even among the most civilized of societies on the surface, we saw a descent into barbarism.

This morning, at Flanders Field, I was reminded of how war between peoples sent a generation to their deaths in the trenches and gas of the First World War. And just two decades later, extreme nationalism plunged this continent into war once again, with populations enslaved and great cities reduced to rubble and tens of millions slaughtered, including those lost in the Holocaust.

It is in response to this tragic history that, in the aftermath of World War II, America joined with Europe to reject the darker forces of the past and built a new architecture of peace. Workers and engineers gave life to the Marshall plan. Sentinels stood vigilant in a NATO alliance that would become the strongest the world has ever known. And across the Atlantic, we embraced a shared vision of Europe, a vision based on representative democracy, individual rights, and a belief that nations can meet the interests of their citizens through trade and open markets, a social safety net, respect for those of different faiths and backgrounds.

For decades, this vision stood in sharp contrast to life on the other side of an Iron Curtain. For decades, a contest was waged, and ultimately, that contest was won not by tanks or missiles, but because our ideals stirred the hearts of Hungarians who sparked a revolution, Poles in their shipyards who stood in Solidarity, Czechs who waged a Velvet Revolution without firing a shot, and East Berliners who marched past the guards and finally tore down that wall.

Today, what would have seemed impossible in the trenches of Flanders, the rubble of Berlin, a dissident's prison cell—that reality is taken for granted: a Germany unified, the nations of Central and Eastern Europe welcomed into the family of democracies. Here in this country, once the battleground of Europe, we meet in the hub of a union that brings together age-old adversaries in peace and cooperation. The people of Europe, hundreds of millions of citizens—east, west, north, south—are more

secure and more prosperous because we stood together for the ideals we share.

And this story of human progress was by no means limited to Europe. Indeed, the ideals that came to define our alliance also inspired movements across the globe, among those very people, ironically, who had too often been denied their full rights by Western powers. After the Second World War, people from Africa to India threw off the yoke of colonialism to secure their independence. In the United States, citizens took freedom rides and endured beatings to put an end to segregation and to secure their civil rights. As the Iron Curtain fell here in Europe, the iron fist of apartheid was unclenched, and Nelson Mandela emerged upright, proud, from prison to lead a multiracial democracy. Latin American nations rejected dictatorship and built new democracies, and Asian nations showed that development and democracy could go hand in hand.

The young people in the audience today—young people like Laura, were born in a place and a time where there is less conflict, more prosperity, and more freedom than any time in human history. But that's not because man's darkest impulses have vanished. Even here, in Europe, we've seen ethnic cleansing in the Balkans that shocked the conscience.

The difficulties of integration and globalization, recently amplified by the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, strained the European project and stirred the rise of a politics that too often targets immigrants or gays or those who seem somehow different.

While technology has opened up vast opportunities for trade and innovation and cultural understanding, it's also allowed terrorists to kill on a horrifying scale. Around the world, sectarian warfare and ethnic conflicts continue to claim thousands of lives. And once again, we are confronted with the belief among some that bigger nations can bully smaller ones to get their way, that recycled maxim that might somehow makes right.

So I come here today to insist that we must never take for granted the progress that has been won here in Europe and advanced around the world, because the contest of ideas continues for your generation. And that's what's at stake in Ukraine today. Russia's leadership is challenging truths that only a few weeks ago seemed self-evident: that in the 21st century, the borders of Europe cannot be redrawn with force; that international law matters; that people and nations can make their own decisions about their future.

To be honest, if we defined our interests narrowly, if we applied a cold-hearted calculus, we might decide to look the other way. Our economy is not deeply integrated with Ukraine's. Our people and our homeland face no direct threat from the invasion of Crimea. Our own borders are not threatened by Russia's annexation. But that kind of casual indifference would ignore the lessons that are written in the cemeteries of this continent. It would allow the old way of doing things to regain a foothold in this young century. And that message would be heard not just in Europe, but in Asia, in the Americas, in Africa, and the Middle East.

And the consequences that would arise from complacency are not abstractions. The impact that they have on the lives of real people—men and women just like us—have to enter into our imaginations. Just look at the young people of Ukraine who were determined to take back their future from a government rotted by corruption, the portraits of the fallen shot by snipers, the visitors who pay their respects at the Maidan. There was the university student, wrapped in the Ukrainian flag, expressing her hope that "every country should live by the law." A postgraduate student, speaking of her fellow protesters, saying, "I want these people who are here to have dignity." Imagine that you are the young woman who said, "There are some things that fear, police sticks, and tear gas cannot destroy."

We've never met these people, but we know them. Their voices echo calls for human dignity that rang out in European streets and squares for generations. Their voices echo those around the world who at this very moment fight for their dignity. These Ukrainians rejected a government that was stealing from the people instead of serving them and are

reaching for the same ideals that allow us to be here today.

None of us can know for certain what the coming days will bring in Ukraine, but I am confident that eventually, those voices—those voices for human dignity and opportunity and individual rights and rule of law—those voices ultimately will triumph. I believe that over the long haul, as nations that are free, as free people, the future is ours. I believe this not because I'm naive, and I believe this not because of the strength of our arms or the size of our economies; I believe this because these ideals that we affirm are true, these ideals are universal.

Yes, we believe in democracy, with elections that are free and fair, and independent judiciaries and opposition parties, civil society and uncensored information so that individuals can make their own choices. Yes, we believe in open economies based on free markets and innovation and individual initiative and entrepreneurship and trade and investment that creates a broader prosperity. And yes, we believe in human dignity: that every person is created equal, no matter who you are or what you look like or who you love or where you come from. That is what we believe. That's what makes us strong.

And our enduring strength is also reflected in our respect for an international system that protects the rights of both nations and people: a United Nations and a Universal Declaration of Human Rights; international law and the means to enforce those laws. But we also know that those rules are not self-executing; they depend on people and nations of good will continually affirming them. And that's why Russia's violation of international law—its assault on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity—must be met with condemnation. Not because we're trying to keep Russia down, but because the principles that have meant so much to Europe and the world must be lifted up.

Over the last several days, the United States, Europe, and our partners around the world have been united in defense of these ideals and united in support of the Ukrainian people. Together, we've condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and rejected the legitimacy of the Crimean referendum. Together, we have isolated Russia politically, suspending it from the G–8 nations and downgrading our bilateral ties. Together, we are imposing costs through sanctions that have left a mark on Russia and those accountable for its actions. And if the Russian leadership stays on its current course, together, we will ensure that this isolation deepens. Sanctions will expand. And the toll on Russia's economy, as well as its standing in the world, will only increase.

And meanwhile, the United States and our allies will continue to support the Government of Ukraine as they chart a democratic course. Together, we are going to provide a significant package of assistance that can help stabilize the Ukrainian economy and meet the basic needs of the people. Make no mistake: Neither the United States nor Europe has any interest in controlling Ukraine. We have sent no troops there. What we want is for the Ukrainian people to make their own decisions, just like other free people around the world.

Understand, as well, this is not another cold war that we're entering into. After all, unlike the Soviet Union, Russia leads no bloc of nations, no global ideology. The United States and NATO do not seek any conflict with Russia. In fact, for more than 60 years, we have come together in NATO, not to claim other lands, but to keep nations free. What we will do—always—is uphold our solemn obligation, our article 5 duty to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our allies. And in that promise, we will never waver; NATO nations never stand alone.

Today, NATO planes patrol the skies over the Baltics, and we've reinforced our presence in Poland. And we're prepared to do more. Going forward, every NATO member state must step up and carry its share of the burden by showing the political will to invest in our collective defense and by developing the capabilities to serve as a source of international peace and security.

Of course, Ukraine is not a member of NATO, in part because of its close and complex history with Russia. Nor will Russia be

dislodged from Crimea or deterred from further escalation by military force. But with time, so long as we remain united, the Russian people will recognize that they cannot achieve security, prosperity, and the status that they seek through brute force. That's why, throughout this crisis, we will combine our substantial pressure on Russia with an open door for diplomacy. I believe that, for both Ukraine and Russia, a stable peace will come through deescalation: direct dialogue between Russia and the Government of Ukraine and the international community, monitors who can ensure that the rights of all Ukrainians are protected, a process of constitutional reform within Ukraine, and free and fair elections this spring.

So far, Russia has resisted diplomatic overtures, annexing Crimea and massing large forces along Ukraine's border. Russia has justified these actions as an effort to prevent problems on its own borders and to protect ethnic Russians inside Ukraine. Of course, there is no evidence—never has been—of systemic violence against ethnic Russians inside of Ukraine. Moreover, many countries around the world face similar questions about their borders and ethnic minorities abroad, about sovereignty and self-determination. These are tensions that have led in other places to debate and democratic referendums, conflicts and uneasy coexistence. These are difficult issues, and it is precisely because these questions are hard that they must be addressed through constitutional means and international laws so that majorities cannot simply suppress minorities and big countries cannot simply bully the small.

In defending its actions, Russian leaders have further claimed Kosovo as a precedent, an example they say of the West interfering in the affairs of a smaller country, just as they're doing now. But NATO only intervened after the people of Kosovo were systematically brutalized and killed for years. And Kosovo only left Serbia after a referendum was organized not outside the boundaries of international law, but in careful cooperation with the United Nations and with Kosovo's neighbors. None of that even came close to happening in Crimea.

Moreover, Russia has pointed to America's decision to go into Iraq as an example of Western hypocrisy. Now, it is true that the Iraq war was a subject of vigorous debate not just around the world, but in the United States as well. I participated in that debate, and I opposed our military intervention there. But even in Iraq, America sought to work within the international system. We did not claim or annex Iraq's territory. We did not grab its resources for our own gain. Instead, we ended our war and left Iraq to its people and a fully sovereign Iraqi state that could make decisions about its own future.

Of course, neither the United States nor Europe are perfect in adherence to our ideals, nor do we claim to be the sole arbiter of what is right or wrong in the world. We are human, after all, and we face difficult decisions about how to exercise our power. But part of what makes us different is that we welcome criticism, just as we welcome the responsibilities that come with global leadership.

We look to the east and the south and see nations poised to play a growing role on the world stage, and we consider that a good thing. It reflects the same diversity that makes us stronger as a nation and the forces of integration and cooperation that Europe has advanced for decades. And in a world of challenges that are increasingly global, all of us have an interest in nations stepping forward to play their part, to bear their share of the burden, and to uphold international norms.

So our approach stands in stark contrast to the arguments coming out of Russia these days. It is absurd to suggest—as a steady drumbeat of Russian voices do—that America is somehow conspiring with Fascists inside of Ukraine or failing to respect the Russian people. My grandfather served in Patton's army, just as many of your fathers and grandfathers fought against fascism. We Americans remember well the unimaginable sacrifices made by the Russian people in World War II, and we have honored those sacrifices.

Since the end of the cold war, we have worked with Russia under successive administrations to build ties of culture and commerce

and international community, not as a favor to Russia, but because it was in our national interests. And together, we've secured nuclear materials from terrorists. We welcomed Russia into the G–8 and the World Trade Organization. From the reduction of nuclear arms to the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons, we believe the world has benefited when Russia chooses to cooperate on the basis of mutual interests and mutual respect.

So America, and the world and Europe, has an interest in a strong and responsible Russia, not a weak one. We want the Russian people to live in security, prosperity, and dignity like everyone else, proud of their own history. But that does not mean that Russia can run roughshod over its neighbors. Just because Russia has a deep history with Ukraine does not mean it should be able to dictate Ukraine's future. No amount of propaganda can make right something that the world knows is wrong.

In the end, every society must chart its own course. America's path or Europe's path is not the only ways to reach freedom and justice. But on the fundamental principle that is at stake here—the ability of nations and peoples to make their own choices—there can be no going back. It's not America that filled the Maidan with protesters, it was Ukrainians. No foreign forces compelled the citizens of Tunis and Tripoli to rise up; they did so on their own. From the Burmese Parliamentarian pursuing reform to the young leaders fighting corruption and intolerance in Africa, we see something irreducible that all of us share as human beings, a truth that will persevere in the face of violence and repression and will ultimately overcome.

For the young people here today, I know it may seem easy to see these events as removed from our lives, remote from our daily routines, distant from concerns closer to home. I recognize that both in the United States and in much of Europe, there's more than enough to worry about in the affairs of our own countries. There will always be voices who say that what happens in the wider world is not our concern, nor our responsibility. But we must never forget that we are heirs to a struggle for freedom. Our democracy, our individual opportunity, only exist because those who came before us had the wisdom and the courage to recognize that our ideals will only endure if we see our self-interest in the success of other peoples and other nations.

Now is not the time for bluster. The situation in Ukraine, like crises in many parts of the world, does not have easy answers nor a military solution. But at this moment, we must meet the challenge to our ideals—to our very international order—with strength and conviction.

And it is you, the young people of Europe, young people like Laura, who will help decide which way the currents of our history will flow. Do not think for a moment that your own freedom, your own prosperity, that your own moral imagination is bound by the limits of your community, your ethnicity, or even your country. You're bigger than that. You can help us to choose a better history. That's what Europe tells us. That's what the American experience is all about.

I say this as the President of a country that looked to Europe for the values that are written into our founding documents, and which spilled blood to ensure that those values could endure on these shores. I also say this as the son of a Kenyan, whose grandfather was a cook for the British, and as a person who once lived in Indonesia as it emerged from colonialism. The ideals that unite us matter equally to the young people of Boston or Brussels or Jakarta or Nairobi or Krakow or Kiev.

In the end, the success of our ideals comes down to us, including the example of our own lives, our own societies. We know that there will always be intolerance. But instead of fearing the immigrant, we can welcome him. We can insist on policies that benefit the many, not just the few; that an age of globalization and dizzying change opens the door of opportunity to the marginalized and not just a privileged few. Instead of targeting our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, we can use our laws to protect their rights. Instead of defining ourselves in opposition to others, we can affirm the aspirations that we hold in common. That's

what will make America strong. That's what will make Europe strong. That's what makes us who we are.

And just as we meet our responsibilities as individuals, we must be prepared to meet them as nations. Because we live in a world in which our ideals are going to be challenged again and again by forces that would drag us back into conflict or corruption. We can't count on others to rise to meet those tests. The policies of your government, the principles of your European Union, will make a critical difference in whether or not the international order that so many generations before you have strived to create continues to move forward or whether it retreats.

And that's the question we all must answer: What kind of Europe, what kind of America, what kind of world will we leave behind? And I believe that if we hold firm to our principles and are willing to back our beliefs with courage and resolve, then hope will ultimately overcome fear, and freedom will continue to triumph over tyranny, because that is what forever stirs in the human heart.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:16 p.m. at the Palais des Beaux-Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Laura Hemmati, cofounder, Leader Arise, and her father Farid Hemmati; and King Philippe, Queen Mathilde, and Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo of Belgium.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy in Rome, Italy
March 27, 2014

[*Prime Minister Renzi began his remarks in English.*]

Prime Minister Renzi. Thank you so much. And obviously, thank you so much to President Obama, because for me, it's a very great pleasure host here in Villa Madama the President Obama. All Italian journalists know very well President Obama is not only a President of United States, obviously, but for me and for my team source of inspiration and model. And so for this reason, I particularly appreciated this opportunity of meeting him.

And now I speak in Italian. And——

[*At this point, Prime Minister Renzi continued in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

I wish to thank the United States Government for this wonderful opportunity to meet. I wish to thank President Obama because I think that today's dialogue not only confirms the fact that there's a great friendship and a great partnership between our two countries, but it also confirms the fact that considering the crises that we have to face up to, the role of the United States and Europe and Italy is to be a beacon. We have to safeguard common values and ideals, so cooperation and partnership embrace important international issues and everyday issues.

I'm happy to say that President Obama has taken a bit of time—will be taking a bit of time to visit some of our monuments and historical places here in Rome, and hopefully, Ambassador John Phillips has prepared some wonderful Italian meals for him, and I'm sure he'll have a taste of the excellent quality of life in this 1½ days that he'll be spending in our country.

When it comes to Italian lifestyle, I think that next year's meeting in Milan at the Expo 2015 is going to be of utmost importance. We're talking there about food, the environment, innovation, and that, of course, is all part of our way of living, and it will be a wonderful opportunity for Italy to host countries from all over the world.

I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for what he said yesterday in Brussels. The great challenge that's been thrown out in the relationship between the U.S. and the European Union is a fascinating

challenge. I do think that in Europe we need reforms, but we also need more growth. I think that Europe must be the place where politics will give hope back to our families.

We spoke today during our meeting, and the President said this in his address yesterday: Our grandfathers had to fight for Europe. The United States had to fight to save democracy in Europe. And in Europe, there was a fratricidal war. I know that my mother used to cry before the Berlin Wall, when that boundary fell, when it broke down. And my generation is the Erasmus generation. I'm thinking of a future generation where there will be a stronger unification process and where in Europe there will be peace and stability, but where there will also be growth and the fight against youth unemployment. We will be investing in our hopes and our prosperity.

So the message delivered yesterday by President Obama was delivered very clearly. And I think that in the EU semester, during which Italy will have the Presidency, we will be delivering the same message. And clearly, Italy will work on the reform and process that is underway. And I don't think we need to talk further about this. I can just confirm that we do want to change Italy, because we are convinced of the fact that if we change Italy, we'll be helping Europe to change as well, and we'll be strengthening our relations with the U.S. evermore.

So from this standpoint, I do confirm the commitment of our country, together with European partners and together with the United States, and in particular in the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean is the place that the Romans used to call "our sea"—*mare nostrum.* Maybe it's not the most appropriate translation. In other words, in Latin they say *mare nostrum.* But we mean, when we say this that there were youngsters who triggered the Arab Spring and, therefore, we need to support all this. We need to support the desire for freedom and democracy of the Libyans and of the people living in North Africa. So this is what I mean when I say it's "our sea," in particular.

So I wish to reassure President Obama that we want to work together, especially in those areas where Italy's presence and impact can be strong. And I also say that Europe should not consider the Mediterranean as a frontier. It should be seen as the heart of our political and cultural and moral actions.

Now, I also wish to underscore that the relations between the United States and the European Union and Italy are still strong, despite the difficult moment in connection with the Ukrainian crisis. President Obama and European nations in the G–7 meeting discussed, in fact, the crisis in Ukraine, and we shared the view that we do not uphold the decisions made by Russia. This goes against international law. And we tried to convey a message showing our unity, our strength, and our great concern and yet our great resolve, the resolve of the international community.

I also appreciated the words of President Obama at the G–7 meeting when he reiterated the need to look into energy issues more thoroughly. I think that during the Italian Presidency of the EU, we'll be able to work with determination and resolve and tenacity. And I also hope that during our Presidency of the EU, we'll be able to move forward in economic cooperation and also in ICT, for example, and in connection with our traditional values and the hopes that we have in terms of boosting employment and doing this also through the ICT sector.

So for all these reasons, I think that today's meeting was indeed important for our government. And I wish to say to President Obama that your first message, "Yes, we can," is a message that we all remember, and we see this as being a huge potential, showing us that there are possibilities, opportunities. And this is an important message for us in Italy as well, because we have to say in Italy today that we know that things need to change; people don't need to ask us to change from the outside. And all the structural changes that we are working on are reforms that will give this hope back to us, the hope that things can, indeed, change.

So President Obama's visit to Italy isn't just a symbolic gesture, it is a form of encouragement

from our greatest friend. And I think that you are also a political beacon for us. And for Italy and for Europe, it is important to have future relations, and the next chapter is going to have to be written, and I think that we can write that together.

Thank you.

President Obama. Buon pomeriggio. [*Laughter*] Thank you, Prime Minister Renzi, for your very kind words. To you and the Italian people, thanks for welcoming me today.

The Prime Minister and I and his fine Foreign Minister spent some time in The Hague, but you can never get too much of your Italian friends, and we were able to continue the discussion today.

My day started with the great honor of meeting His Holiness Pope Francis. And like people around the world, I've been incredibly moved by his compassion, his message of inclusion. I was grateful to have the opportunity to speak with him about the responsibilities that we all share to care for "the least of these"—the poor, the excluded. And I was extremely moved by his insights about the importance of us all having a moral perspective on world problems and not simply thinking in terms of our own narrow self-interests.

Of course, it's wonderful to be back in Rome, one of the truly great cities of the world. I should point out, though, that while this is our first official bilateral meeting, I already had the chance to welcome Matteo Renzi to the White House. He came a few years ago as part of a group of mayors, back when he served as the mayor of Florence—*il primo cittadino.* And I look forward to the opportunity to welcome the Prime Minister back, this time as Prime Minister.

I also want to say that I had a wonderful meeting with my good friend President Napolitano, and I think that Italy is lucky to have such an extraordinary statesman to help them guide the country through some challenging times.

Italy and the United States share extraordinary bonds of history and family and culture. We're especially grateful and proud for the Italian Americans who have made enormous contributions to our country. Italy is one of our closest allies. Our partnership is one of the strongest links binding Europe and the United States together.

And I've made clear throughout this trip that our partnership with Europe is the foundation of America's engagement in the world. It's a cornerstone of our security policy. So I appreciated the opportunity to consult with the Prime Minister on a wide range of issues.

On a more personal level, I want to say that I've just been impressed by the energy and vision that Matteo is bringing to his position. He's—there's a seriousness and ambition of ideas, and I think the spirit and the energy of the Italian people has the opportunity to be unleashed in a way that will be good for Italy, but it will also be good for Europe. And so it's wonderful to see this new generation of leadership coming to the fore.

As the Prime Minister indicated, we focused on the situation in Ukraine, something I've been talking about over the last 3 days, and we continue to see international unity in the face of a violation of international law and Ukraine's territorial integrity. The IMF's announcement today that it reached a preliminary agreement with Ukraine on a loan program is a major step forward. This significant package of support is going to help Ukraine stabilize its economy and meet the needs of the Ukrainian people over the long term because it provides the prospect for true growth. It will require some structural reforms, but it also means that Ukraine can go on a path that countries like Poland have been able to embark on and seen incredible growth over the last several years.

It's also going to reinforce democratic reforms, and it should help unlock some $27 billion in international support for Ukraine. So it's a concrete signal of how the world is united with Ukraine as it makes tough choices at an incredibly difficult time.

And Ukraine's leaders can show considerable courage and foresight by making the reforms that will help them grow their economy, leave behind the corruption of the past. And today I want to call on the United States Congress to make sure that the United States does

its part with an economic assistance package that helps support the Ukrainian people as they move forward.

As NATO allies, the United States and Italy are going to uphold our solemn obligation to the security of our allies. As G–7 partners, our decision to move ahead with our summit in Brussels without Russia is an example, a signal of Russia's growing isolation. The sanctions that the United States and the European Union have imposed will continue to grow if Russia doesn't change course. But as I said yesterday in Brussels, we are continually hopeful that Russia walks through the door of diplomacy and works with all of us to try to resolve this issue in a peaceful way. And we will continue to coordinate closely with Italy and our other European partners throughout this crisis.

I thanked the Prime Minister as well as President Napolitano for Italy's commitment to NATO. Italian forces have served admirably in Afghanistan, where Italy is one of our largest contributors to the coalition; in Kosovo, where Italians command the NATO force. I would add that Italy both commands and contributes a large number of peacekeepers to the U.N. force in Lebanon. And at the Nuclear Security Summit this week, we announced the complete removal of Italy's excess highly enriched uranium so it can be eliminated. And this was a critical step in our work to make sure that dangerous materials don't fall into the hands of terrorists. And it's one more example of Italian leadership across the board.

We discussed the need to boost economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic so that we're creating jobs for our people, especially young people. And that's why, in addition to the kinds of steps that the Prime Minister has outlined and that he plans to pursue internally, we have an opportunity also to move forward with a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership that can actually boost growth and investment not just for large, but also for small and medium-sized businesses on both sides of the Atlantic.

I commended President—Prime Minister Renzi for his efforts to make it easier for Italian companies to hire more workers and to make the Italian economy more competitive. And I know that a lot more remains to be done. There are going to be tough choices, but as Italy moves forward and makes the hard decisions, the United States will continue to stand with you.

Finally, we discussed some broader global issues. Italy played a critical role in the NATO air campaign to protect the Libyan people 3 years ago. We're now going to be working together to make sure that they can develop the security forces that can restore order to Libya and make sure that they have a government that is actually serving the Libyan people.

The entire world appreciates the vital role Italy will play in the international effort to destroy Syria's chemical weapons. It's an Italian port where chemicals from Syria's stockpiles will be unloaded and transferred to U.S. ships for elimination. And this is another example of how we work together not just for ourselves, but for the world.

And we are looking forward to being back in Italy, in Milan, hosting the World—or being part of the World Exposition next year that Italy is hosting. I'm proud to announce today that the United States will participate in the Expo. And together with our partners, we're going to put together an outstanding U.S.A. pavilion that showcases American innovation to improve agriculture and nutrition and the health of people around the globe. I know the Milan Expo is going to engage and educate the world as only Italy can. And I will tell you that I already have some volunteers from my staff who want to go and really make sure that the Expo goes smoothly. [*Laughter*] I suspect that some restaurants and shopping may somewhere be in their agenda.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your friendship and your leadership. I'm confident that together we can build on the progress that we've already made, and I'm even more confident that the bonds between our two nations will continue to grow, rooted in the enduring friendship between our two peoples.

Molte grazie.

Prime Minister Renzi. Grazie.

[*Prime Minister Renzi spoke in English.*]

Thank you so much, Mr. President. Thank you so much also for the shopping and the food; it's absolutely important for our economy. So—[*laughter*].

Four questions? Okay.

President Obama. Who's first?

Prime Minister Renzi. For America—okay. TG1. *So che è TG1. Bene.*

European Economy/Italian Economy/President Obama's Meeting With Pope Francis/U.S. Economy

[*The Reporter spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Q. Channel 1 News, Channel 1 News. Good afternoon. Prime Minister Renzi, you said a moment ago that you will be—you are committed to creating a new Europe with less austerity and more growth, less bureaucracy, and we have to be closer to the people. Now, is there an American model to be followed here? Are you asking the U.S. to support that——

[*The reporter continued in English.*]

——this effort by Italy to change, modify the European policies in the economic field? And what kind of Europe would you like to see for better cooperation in the economic field and also in the defense field, which you mentioned yesterday? Thank you.

[*Prime Minister Renzi spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Prime Minister Renzi. Italy's first effort is going to be to change Italy. Italy doesn't have alibis any longer. Italy mustn't think that its own problems and its opportunities will come from the outside, from Europe or the U.S. We have to change ourselves. We are a great country, and we are able to change. We have to reduce our oppressing bureaucracy. We have to reduce, downsize our political class and the costs. And we have to work on our labor market; we—because our international investors have to know that this is a great place for their ideas and their businesses to grow.

So this is why we say to Italians and to all our fellow citizens that we shouldn't be looking for an excuse. Nobody is going to do this from the outside. We have to change ourselves from within. And of course, if we have that credibility, which is needed, if we believe in ourselves, then Europe is going to have to focus more on growth and less on bureaucracy. I think that this is how it should be. And I spoke to Angela Merkel, François Hollande, Dave Cameron about this. We will be discussing this during our semester of Presidency.

So can the U.S. be a model? You asked that. Of course.

Over the years, under the leadership of President Obama, the United States has chosen an ambitious course. They have been rebuilding their economy in America. In fact, that's a message that we've received. We decided to call our measures "Jobs Act." This is the same term used in the U.S., more or less, and this is a way of helping youth have more credibility, have more space, more room; we have to make sure that our investors want to come. So of course, the U.S. can be seen as a model.

And the important point is that Italy has to do its homework. In other words, Italy must finally put into practice the structural reforms that we've been waiting for, for the past 20 years. And my government and our credibility over the next 4 years is going to come from that. We want to change ourselves, and clearly we're doing it in an interconnected, global world. We know that Europe has to think a bit more about the future and a bit less about the past. And the friendship and cooperation and partnership with the U.S., therefore, are a unrelinquishable beacon for us.

President Obama. Well, before I talk about the future, let me just talk about the recent past, because I think that Europe has taken some important steps and they deserve credit. As recently as a year and a half, 2 years ago, we were very worried about the euro spinning out of control. There were enormous challenges

across the board. I think because of strong coordination within the euro zone, because of some smart actions by the European Central Bank, the financial situation has stabilized.

I also think that there were countries that were under enormous market pressure; borrowing rates were skyrocketing. And because of some tough decisions, you've seen those—the ability of countries to borrow on the international markets stabilizing. All that was necessary, and it was important, and it could not have happened had it not been for a coordinated response among a lot of European leaders. We've also seen some movement towards banking union, which I think is helpful. And there are some other multilateral reforms that are taking place that we have encouraged.

Now, having said that, what is also true is, is that Europe's growth is still very slow and its unemployment rate is still very high. And nobody knows that better than Prime Minister Renzi. That's part of his mission, is to reinvigorate the Italian economy. Each country is going to have a different set of issues that it's going to have to address because each country has both strengths and weaknesses in their economy. And I think that Prime Minister Renzi has identified some of the structural reforms that Italy needs to engage in in order for it to be more competitive and more successful. And I'm confident that he's going to be able to move Italy forward, in part because Italy is ready to move forward.

As far as Europe as a whole, I do think that the old debate about growth versus austerity is a sterile debate. I think you need to have your public finances in order, but you also have to grow. And the more you grow, the easier it is to get your public finances in order. There are different capacities within Europe. And I've said before, and I will repeat again, that those countries that have substantial surpluses have more room to help boost Europeanwide demand. And that, in turn, will help countries that are still in deficit. That will lift Europe as a whole, and that means that everybody is growing.

And so in my conversations with President Barroso and Van Rompuy yesterday at the European Union, I encouraged them to continue to identify ways in which countries with surpluses can do more to boost demand while still being prudent about their public finances.

The last point, I guess, I would make is, in terms of the United States and how we can be helpful, part of it is us making sure that we're taking care of our own issues. It's not as if we don't have a lot of work to do ourselves. We've grown faster than Europe, and I think we recovered in part because we took some smart steps, but we also have some fundamental problems that many advanced nations face, and then in fact, I had discussed with His Holiness Pope Francis this morning, and that is an increasing tendency in the world economy for those who benefit from globalization and technology to do better than ever before, those at the top; those at the bottom or in the middle having more and more problems, in part because perhaps their jobs have been rendered obsolete, in part because it's very difficult to see wages increase. Companies feel as if they can always move if labor makes too great a demand on wage increases or salary increases.

And so all of us are seeing some structural problems in this new economy. And that means we've got to redouble our efforts to educate our young people; to make sure that we have the capacity to provide skills to our workers; if they lose their jobs they can transition quickly; that we have a strong baseline of social support for people if they end up transitioning out of jobs; that we're paying more attention to opening up opportunity for people who've been locked out, particularly young people.

Because as I mentioned to the Prime Minister, one of the tragedies of high youth unemployment is that when young people don't have a strong attachment to the labor market early, that can continue for the rest of their careers, and they never fully recoup what's lost in terms of their potential earnings and their ability to advance in the labor market.

And so we can't afford to have years and years of young people who are drifting, working part time, not able to develop the kinds of careers and skills that will allow them to succeed in the future. That has to be a priority.

And I know Prime Minister Renzi is focused on it.

Jim Acosta, CNN.

President Obama's Meeting With Pope Francis/Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act/Ukraine

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. *Grazie,* Mr. Prime Minister.

Mr. President, in your meeting with His Holiness Pope Francis, did he register any objections with you about the contraception coverage mandate in the Affordable Care Act or your efforts to advance the rights of gays and lesbians in the United States that worry so many Catholics? And what were his concerns?

And on Russia, with reports of troops building on the Ukrainian border, by taking the military option off the table are you sending a signal to Vladimir Putin that other parts of Ukraine are his for the taking? And why not send multinational peacekeepers to the Ukrainian border as a deterrent?

And to you, Mr. Prime Minister, the President said yesterday that the U.S. would defend any NATO ally. Are you making that same commitment when it comes to Russia?

President Obama. That's a lot of questions there, Jim. [*Laughter*] Do the Italian journalists, by the way, do this—these sort of five-part questions? [*Laughter*] Same thing?

[*Prime Minister Renzi spoke in English.*]

Prime Minister Renzi. I can't say about Italian journalism. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. The—all right, let me try to remember this. In terms of the meeting with His Holiness Pope Francis, we had a wide-ranging discussion. I would say that the largest bulk of the time was discussing two central concerns of his. One is the issues of the poor, the marginalized, those without opportunity, and growing inequality.

And those of us as politicians have the task of trying to come up with policies to address issues, but His Holiness has the capacity to open people's eyes and make sure they're seeing that this is an issue. And he's discussed in the past, I think, the dangers of indifference or cynicism when it comes to our ability to reach out to those less fortunate or those locked out of opportunity.

And then we spent a lot of time talking about the challenges of conflict and how elusive peace is around the world. There was some specific focus on the Middle East, where His Holiness has a deep interest in the Israeli-Palestinian issue, but also what's happening in Syria, what's happening in Lebanon, and the potential persecution of Christians. And I reaffirmed that it is central to U.S. foreign policy that we protect the interests of religious minorities around the world.

But we also touched on regions like Latin America, where there's been tremendous progress in many countries, but there's been less progress in others.

I think what—the theme that stitched our conversation together was a belief that in politics and in life, the quality of empathy, the ability to stand in somebody else's shoes and to care for someone even if they don't look like you or talk like you or share your philosophy, that that's critical. It's the lack of empathy that makes it very easy for us to plunge into wars. It's the lack of empathy that allows us to ignore the homeless on the streets. And obviously, central to my Christian faith is a belief in treating others as they—I'd have them treat me. And what's, I think, created so much love and excitement for His Holiness has been that he seems to live this and shows that joy continuously.

In terms of domestic issues, the two issues that we touched on—other than the fact that I invited and urged him to come visit the United States, telling him that people would be overjoyed to see him—was immigration reform. And as someone who came from Latin America, I think he was very mindful of the plight of so many immigrants who are wonderful people, working hard, making contributions, many of their children are U.S. citizens, and yet they still live in the shadows, in many cases have been deported, and are separated from families. I described to him how I felt that there

was still an opportunity for us to make this right and get a law passed.

And he actually did not touch, in detail, on the Affordable Care Act. In my Cardinal—in my meeting with his Secretary of State, Cardinal Parolin, we discussed briefly the issue of making sure that conscience and religious freedom was observed in the context of applying the law. And I explained to him that most religious organizations are entirely exempt. Religiously affiliated hospitals or universities or NGOs simply have to attest that they have a religious objection, in which case they are not required to provide contraception, although employees of theirs who choose are able to obtain it through the insurance company.

And I pledged to continue to dialogue with the U.S. Conference of Bishops to make sure that we can strike the right balance, making sure that not only everybody has health care, but families, and women in particular, are able to enjoy the kind of health care coverage that the ACA offers, but that religious freedom is still observed.

Q. And on Russia——

President Obama. There was a third question? What was that, the third—okay, that's right, Russia. Okay, I remember.

I think that I've been very clear in saying that we are going to do everything we can to support Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. But I think that it's also important for us not to promise and then not be able to deliver. There are ways for us to, hopefully, influence Russian decisionmaking, and one of the most important things that we can do on that front is ensure that the Ukrainian Government is stable, that its finances are stable, and that elections go forward as currently scheduled so that we have a legitimate, strong, representative, inclusive government with an economic program that it is implementing and carrying out.

And all those things are in place, but we're going to have to put a lot of resources and a lot of effort, not just the United States, but Europe as well.

And I've been very impressed with Prime Minister Yatsenyuk and his current efforts. The decision to go forward with an IMF program with a lot of resources is going to require a lot of courage. But keep in mind that part of what prompted the original protests that led to the previous President leaving was an objection about the same corrupt practices, an economy that was completely inefficient, that had led to a situation in which Poland's GDP had skyrocketed and the Ukraine's had plummeted, when they started off at the same place just several years ago.

I think the Prime Minister understands that. I think the Ukrainian people understand that. It will require some tough decisions, but Prime Minister Renzi is also making tough decisions; we've had to make some tough decisions. That's the nature of political leadership. And I think that's what the Ukrainian people are seeking, is a better future, even if it requires some short-term changes to business as usual.

[*Prime Minister Renzi spoke in English.*]

Prime Minister Renzi. The question for me is more clear, and the answer is easy: yes. Yes, because I think that the crisis in Ukraine is very bad situation, but the reaction of European Union and the United States is a reaction with one voice. Not different voice, one voice. And for this reason, I think the statement of G–7 in Brussels and the decisions for the future are decision very important for Italy, and we are absolutely committed in this direction.

ANSA.

U.S. Defense Spending/European Defense Spending/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Let me confess that I'll probably have more than one question myself. I'll be quick. President Obama, you said you're concerned with regard to defense cuts in NATO countries, but you said that freedom doesn't come without a cost. But Europe is coming out of a very hard crisis, difficult crisis, and we know that we need austerity in many sectors, including in defense. And in fact, there's a debate ongoing right now in Italy on a possible reduction in the commissioning F–35. So how can we reconcile the need to have fiscal discipline and to keep military spending under control? Now,

you spoke about structural reforms. Do you think that's the best way to reinvigorate the country?

Now, to the Prime Minister, did you talk about the Italian Marine riflemen during your talks?

President Obama. When it comes to defense spending, all of us have to make sure that our defense forces are efficient, effective; that for every dollar or lira that we're spending, that we're getting the most defense for our money.

And so in the United States, we've reduced our defense spending as we've brought two wars to a close. There's a natural transition. The kinds of spending increases that we had seen were unsustainable. And I recognize that in Europe—and I discussed this with both Prime Minister Renzi as well as President Napolitano—there are opportunities for greater efficiencies, not only within a country's own defenses, but also by collaborating between European countries so that you don't have too much duplication and excess capacity. And in fact, Secretary General Rasmussen has repeatedly put forward plans for building NATO defense capacity in ways that reduce duplication and ensure that we are getting the most for our money.

But having said that, there is a certain irreducible commitment that countries have to make if they're serious about NATO and the defense alliance. And I've been very realistic, I think, with my European partners: We, the United States, obviously have the largest military in the world, and we recognize we have some extraordinary responsibilities. We don't expect every country to duplicate exactly what we do. We have responsibilities in the Middle East. We have responsibilities in Asia, Latin America. We welcome those responsibilities, and we understand that that is a particular role that we play. But we're also a partnership in NATO, and it—we can't have a situation in which the United States is consistently spending over 3 percent of our GDP on defense, much of that focused on Europe, potentially more if we end up having ongoing crises within Europe, and Europe is spending, let's say, 1 percent. The gap becomes too large.

Obviously, small countries will still be having a lot less capacity than us, but proportionally to their GDP, we need to make sure that everybody is doing their fair share. That's not just for our benefit, it's also because Europe is going to have its own unique defense needs.

Prime Minister Renzi spoke about the Mediterranean. Conceivably, Italy is going to develop more and more specialized capacity in addressing particular challenges in North Africa or in other parts of the Mediterranean. Well, that's going to require some resources in order to do that. So this is not something that's going to have to happen overnight, but there has to be a trajectory that recognizes the need for everybody pitching in, because we—as I said yesterday, we cannot take our freedom for granted.

[*Prime Minister Renzi spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Prime Minister Renzi. Yes, we did speak about the two riflemen who are being illegally detained in India. And I thanked the U.S. and the U.S. Government for the support that they've given us in this phase of the international discussion, and I've asked President Obama to be able to count on further support. We want the issue to be dealt with at an ever more international level.

But I need to be honest with you, and therefore, I need to say something about the questions that you addressed to President Obama, but also to the Italian Government. In other words, I agree; I know what President Obama means when he says that freedom cannot come free of charge. And we cannot complain that there is pain and suffering in the world unless we wish to deal with these problems through an alliance based on freedom and democracy, and common and shared values. We have to shoulder our responsibilities.

And I think that Italy always has done its share over the years. We know where our strengths are, what the numbers are, but I think we've always been highly devoted and deeply committed. And I thank President Obama for having yet—recognized yet again the strong partnership between our countries. I mean,

when Italians have been asked to shoulder responsibilities, they've always tried to do it with the utmost commitment and honor.

And I think that over the coming years, we're going to have to insist on the concept that was just illustrated by the President; i.e., we have to become specialized, especially in certain areas. We cannot keep saying that the EU has a role to play and then pull back and say, well, the U.S. is there, and they're always going to come to support us in the end. That's not right. It's not fair. We are partners, and we have to work together. I agree with President Obama.

Now, the issues—and the President said quite rightly—pertaining to efficiencies and making our system more efficient, our public administration, we have to reduce costs there and in the defense sector. I mean, it's there for everyone to see. We wish to continue cooperating and collaborating with our partners. And we will, therefore, keep checking our budgets to make sure that we have the resources to intervene all over the world. And at the same time, we have to avoid any waste, and we know that in some sectors there has been waste.

President Obama. Julianna Goldman [Bloomberg News]. You get the last word.

President Obama's Meeting With Pope Francis/International Economic Sanctions Against Russia

Q. Thank you, Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister. Mr. President, I just want to follow up on Jim's question on your meeting with the Pope today. Do you think some of the schisms that he referenced on social issues would stand in the way of you and Pope Francis collaborating or forming a strategic alliance to tackle income inequality?

And then, on Russia, you've said that there are costs of further sanctions on the global—that would affect the global economy. How do U.S.—would U.S. companies with interests in Russia and Americans as a whole feel those costs?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. President—President Obama on this trip has said that Europeans need to step up when it comes to confronting Russia and also supporting Ukraine. But given the fragile recovery here in Italy, can Italy really step up, or does it need to step back? And are you concerned that Congress's failure to approve additional IMF reforms would prevent the U.S. from stepping up enough? Thank you.

President Obama. First of all, I just want to make clear—maybe it wasn't clear from my answer to Jim—that we actually didn't talk a whole lot about social schisms in my conversations with His Holiness. In fact, that really was not a topic of conversation.

I think His Holiness and the Vatican have been clear about their position on a range of issues. Some of them I differ with; most I heartily agree with. And I don't think that His Holiness envisions entering into a partnership or a coalition with any political figure on any issue. His job is a little more elevated. We're down on the ground dealing with the often profane, and he is dealing with higher powers.

I do think that there is a potential convergence between what policymakers need to be thinking about and what he's talking about. I think he is shining a spotlight on an area that's going to be of increasing concern, and that is reduced opportunities for more and more people, particularly young people, who, by the way, have more and more access to seeing what's out there and what's possible because they have access to the Internet or they have access to other media, and they see the inequality, and they see themselves being locked out in ways that weren't true before. And that's true internationally, not just within countries.

And so for him to say that we need to think about this, we need to focus on this, we need to come up with policies that provide a good education for every child and good nutrition for every child and decent shelter and opportunity and jobs, he is not going to get into details of it, but he reminds us of what our moral and ethical obligations are. It happens also to be good economics and good national security policy: Countries are more stable, they're going to grow faster, when everybody has a chance, not just when a few have a chance.

So he's, hopefully, creating an environment in which those of us who care about this are able to talk about it more effectively. And we are in many ways following not just his lead, but the teachings of Jesus Christ and other religions that care deeply about the "least of these."

With respect to Russia, what was your question? You guys ask me too many questions. I can't remember them all.

Q. On U.S. companies—[*inaudible*].

President Obama. Oh, U.S. companies. Well, this probably converges with the question you asked Prime Minister Renzi. We have not yet taken steps that would target entire sectors of the Russian economy like finance or military sales or energy. But what we are doing in consultation with our allies is to work through each of those sectors and look at what kinds of sanctions potentially could have a powerful impact.

None of them, to have a powerful impact on Russia, are going to have zero impact on us, because Russia is part of the world economy. This is part of the reason why I said yesterday we're not looking at a possible return to the cold war. The economies have changed, the politics have changed. Russia is not leading an ideological bloc that's opposed to the world economy. Gazprom is listed on world markets, and everybody owns a piece of everything.

So there will be some impact. Hopefully, we can design sanctions that minimize the impact on U.S. companies or Italian companies and maximize the impact on the narrow set of interests in Russia that help drive the decisions that they're making. But those are highly technical. That's the work that's being done right now. Even better, hopefully, we don't have to use them because Russia decides that they should take the wiser course and accept the offer of the international community and the Ukrainian Government to try to resolve this in a peaceful and lawful way.

[*Prime Minister Renzi spoke in English.*]

Prime Minister Renzi. We reaffirm our commitment very clear, and we stay strong and very determined with our partners. And so there is—there are values in our country. The first value is not money. The first value is the ideal of democracy and freedom.

[*Prime Minister Renzi spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

But let me say something in Italian. This is a concept that I want Italians to understand.

[*Prime Minister Renzi spoke in English.*]

[*Inaudible*]—I'm sorry because I have a little concept—this is the last, I think.

[*Prime Minister Renzi spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

The Italian economy is not in any condition to be in a crisis and to therefore not be able to deal with the crisis in Ukraine. And this is an important concept, and I want it to be crystal clear for our Italian journalist friends. We can be there. We can face up to a possible energy crisis. We have the resources with which to do that.

And we've always got to remember that we may have high public debt, but we always have private savings, which is four times—right—public debt, and we have a primary surplus. We've had this over the years at a constant level. And our economic growth statistics don't make us the Cinderella of Europe and international institutions. So we have to supersede this thinking. And it isn't only a question of making these economic and financial calculations.

When, during the Second World War, our American friends came to fight in this country, they didn't do it for economic reasons. And when I was the mayor of Florence, I went every year to the cemetery—which is one of the most impressive places because of the silence—the U.S. cemetery there. There were so many families who have lost their young American soldiers, and they lost their lives to defend the values and freedom in our country, a country that perhaps they had never even vis-

ited. Now, I don't think that that's a question of economic calculation or cost, you see.

And therefore, I would ask our friends in the Italian press to realize that the data that we are working with in the Ukraine crisis and in the crisis with Russia aren't only based on economic considerations. And this is why the relations and our friendship with the United States of America have trade implications. And I think that during the European semester of Presidency, we have to come to an agreement. Hopefully, we'll manage to do this, and maybe it will come in 2015 if we don't manage to do it during the Italian Presidency. So I was saying, we come to an agreement on the trade agreement with the United States.

But what I'm trying to say—and this is why I wish to thank President Obama—is that there are shared values. In just a moment, President Obama will be making a private visit in some of the most beautiful places in Rome, extraordinary places. Those beautiful and extraordinary places in Rome are—well, if they had been created today, there would have been some bureaucrats saying, no, we're spending too much money, we're not creating the right thing. Those are places of beauty, you see, that have a huge impact of huge importance. And those are the places that don't make our country an economic superpower, but a cultural superpower.

So with the same kind of commitment with which we defend our past, we wish to build our future together with our allies. So I think we have to be a bit bolder, a bit more enthusiastic. And if you don't mind my saying this, we need to be a bit more ambitious, because I think that today Italy begins to—needs to start dreaming bigger than it has up to now.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:18 p.m. at the Villa Madama. In his remarks, the President referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini of Italy; President José Manuel Durão Barroso of the European Commission; President Herman Van Rompuy of the European Council; and former President Viktor Yanukovych of Ukraine, who left the country after being removed from office in February by a vote in Parliament. Prime Minister Renzi referred to his mother Laura Bovoli; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; President François Hollande of France; Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom; and Massimiliano Latorre and Salvatore Girone, Italian Marine riflemen accused of killing two Indian fisherman during a security convoy mission to protect an oil tanker off the coast of Kerala, India, on February 15, 2012. Some reporters spoke in Italian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the National Security Agency's Section 215 Bulk Telephony Metadata Program

March 27, 2014

Earlier this year in a speech at the Department of Justice, I announced a transition that would end the section 215 bulk telephony metadata program as it previously existed and that we would establish a mechanism to preserve the capabilities we need without the Government holding this bulk metadata. I did so to give the public greater confidence that their privacy is appropriately protected, while maintaining the tools our intelligence and law enforcement agencies need to keep us safe.

In that January 17 speech, I ordered that a transition away from the prior program would proceed in two steps. In addition to directing immediate changes to the program, I also directed the intelligence community and the Attorney General to use this transition period to develop options for a new approach to match the capabilities and fill gaps that the section 215 program was designed to address without the Government holding this metadata. I instructed them to report back to me with options for alternative approaches before the

program comes up for reauthorization on March 28th. As part of this process, we consulted with the Congress, the private sector, and privacy and civil liberties groups and developed a number of alternative approaches.

Having carefully considered the available options, I have decided that the best path forward is that the Government should not collect or hold this data in bulk. Instead, the data should remain at the telephone companies for the length of time it currently does today. The Government would obtain the data pursuant to individual orders from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) approving the use of specific numbers for such queries if a judge agrees based on national security concerns. Legislation will be needed to permit the Government to obtain this information with the speed and in the manner that will be required to make this approach workable.

I believe this approach will best ensure that we have the information we need to meet our intelligence needs while enhancing public confidence in the manner in which the information is collected and held. My team has been in touch with key Congressional leadership—including from the Judiciary and Intelligence Committees—and we are committed to working with them to see legislation passed as soon as possible. Given that this legislation will not be in place by March 28 and given the importance of maintaining this capability, I have directed the Department of Justice to seek a 90-day reauthorization of the existing program including the modifications I directed in January. I am confident that this approach can provide our intelligence and law enforcement professionals the information they need to keep us safe while addressing the legitimate privacy concerns that have been raised.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Maria Contreras-Sweet as Administrator of the Small Business Administration
March 27, 2014

With the bipartisan confirmation of Maria Contreras-Sweet as the next Administrator of the Small Business Administration, the American people will have a fierce champion who understands what it means to start a small business and who has a proven track record of helping other small businesses succeed.

As the founder of ProAmérica Bank, Maria helped provide loans to small businesses that needed them, especially within the Latino community. Maria also served the citizens of California as secretary of business, transportation, and housing, becoming the first Latina cabinet secretary in California history and playing a critical role in ensuring that entrepreneurs and small-business owners across her State had access to the capital they needed to start and grow their businesses.

As we work to keep our economy growing, Maria will be charged with looking for more ways to support small businesses. Two years ago, I elevated the role of Small Business Administrator to a Cabinet-level position to make sure small businesses have the seat at the table they deserve. I'm confident that as the newest member of my Cabinet, Maria will to do an outstanding job working with me, with America's small-business owners, and with my entire administration to increase economic growth and expand opportunity for all.

Statement on the Death of Former Senator Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr.
March 28, 2014

Jeremiah Denton bravely served his country as a naval aviator in Vietnam and went on to represent the people of Alabama in the U.S. Senate. After his aircraft was shot down by enemy fire in North Vietnam, he spent nearly 8 years as a prisoner of war. One of the highest ranking officers to be taken prisoner in Vietnam, he endured torture, starvation,

and years of solitary confinement with extraordinary fortitude. The valor that he and his fellow POWs displayed was deeply inspiring to our Nation at the time, and it continues to inspire our brave men and women who serve today. As Senator, he served as a strong advocate for our national security. He leaves behind a legacy of heroic service to his country, and Michelle and I send our condolences to the Denton family.

Remarks on Presenting the Department of State's International Women of Courage Award to Maha Al Muneef of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
March 29, 2014

The President. For the press, I just wanted to let everybody know Dr. Al Muneef was a recipient of the International Women of Courage Award that the State Department annually presents to women who are doing extraordinary work around the world advocating on behalf of women, children, and families. She was not able to attend because of family health issues, but we were aware of the fact that we'd be able to see her here today to personally present the award.

I'm doing this on behalf of Michelle Obama, who normally is the presenter, and I know that Dr. Al Muneef is disappointed that it's me instead of Michelle, appropriately so. [*Laughter*] But Dr. Maha Al Muneef has been able to not only set up services here in the Kingdom, but also, more importantly in some ways, been able to pass laws providing protections for women and children for domestic abuse and to provide a safe space and shelter for those who are suffering from domestic abuse.

And so to see the kind of progress that's been made, her ability to work with the Kingdom to persuade many that this is an issue that is going to be important to the society over the long term, I think makes this award fully justified. And so we're very, very proud of you and grateful for all the work you're doing here, and I'm looking forward to seeing you do even more wonderful things in the future.

Dr. Al Muneef. Thank you very much, and I'm really honored and thrilled to have this award. Thank you very much, and welcome to Saudi Arabia. And I hope this is—[*inaudible*]—the first step, and we're moving forward on the women's issues in Saudi Arabia. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you so much. Thank you. And she has wonderful children who are here. And so the——

Dr. Al Muneef. They're taking pictures.

The President. All—she's very proud of them. Oh, there they are. They're taking pictures.

Dr. Al Muneef. They're taking pictures.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:56 a.m. at the Ritz-Carlton, Riyadh hotel.

Remarks Honoring the 2013 World Series Champion Boston Red Sox
April 1, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody!

Audience members. Hello!

The President. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. I've got a few things to say here.

First of all, it's great to see you as we kick off the 2014 baseball season. Now, I thought I invited the Red Sox here today, but there must be a mistake, because I don't recognize all these clean-shaven guys. [*Laughter*] There's one guy, a couple guys, who decided they thought the beard was working for them.

But beards or no beards, it is an honor to welcome the 2013 World Series Champion Boston Red Sox to the White House. I have to say, you all have some fanatical fans. [*Laughter*] And many of them occupy my administration and the White House. Look at my White House Photographer. He's been thinking

about this day all week. I've got my Press Secretary there. I am surrounded by Red Sox fans. And I know that there—all the Members of Congress from the New England delegation, who are equally fanatic.

Back in 2004, watching the Red Sox win the World Series was a novelty. But over the past 10 years, this clubhouse has the winningest championship record in baseball—[*applause*]—three World Series titles in a decade, under the leadership of John Henry, Tom Werner, Larry Lucchino, and their partners. And since they won this one at Fenway, the diehards can finally declare that the Curse has definitively been broken.

Obviously, all the wins were sweet for Red Sox fans, but I think for the Nation as a whole, there was something about this particular squad that was special and will go down in history, not just because they went from worst to first, but because they symbolized the grit and the resilience of America's—one of America's iconic cities during one of its most difficult moments.

Nearly 1 year ago, hundreds of thousands gathered on a beautiful spring day to run and cheer the historic Boston Marathon. But a senseless act of terror turned celebration into chaos and joy into anguish. Four young people lost their lives. Hundreds were injured. The city was rocked. But under the guiding hand of somebody who I consider one of the finest public servants that America has known, Mayor Tom Menino of Boston—who is here today, and his lovely wife—Boston stood resolute—[*applause*]. Boston stood resolute and unbowed and unbroken.

And as the smoke cleared, we gained inspiration from the injured who gamely tackled their recovery—those who are running and walking again, including the young woman who has returned to professional dancing with a prosthetic leg. And we took heart from the first responders who put their lives at risk and bravely ran toward danger, people like Officer Richard Donahue of the MBTA Transit Police, who was shot and nearly killed that night. After months of rehab, Richard is walking again and keeping up with his 18-month-old son, and so we're proud to have Richard here today. Give him a big round of applause.

Today, our hearts are in Boston again. We've got the families of firefighters Michael Kennedy and Lieutenant Edward Walsh, who gave their lives protecting others from a massive blaze last week. And their sacrifice, like the sacrifice of those made last year, remind us of the selfless courage of everyday heroes who put their lives on the line to help others. The first responders, the brave citizens, the resolute victims of these tragedies—they're all "Boston Strong." And ultimately, that's what this team played for last season, and every man behind me did his part to keep the team rolling.

There was Xander Boegarts, the upstart rookie who took over at third base and didn't let up. The tested veterans like my fellow Hawaiian Shane Victorino, and Mike Napoli, who came in during the offseason and shook off the rust and the injuries to secure win after win. Lackey and Lester, the heart of a rotation that upped their game and started begging their manager, John Farrell, to stay in for six and seven and eight innings. And of course, the legend, the only man to play for all three championship teams, the biggest bat in the dugout: Big Papi—[*applause*]—Big Papi. That's what I'm talking about. Love this guy. Even a White Sox fan can appreciate these guys. [*Laughter*]

But for all the big names, this was never a single superstar's team. If you look at the numbers, no pitcher won more than 15 games, no batter hit more than 30 home runs. And yet they led the majors in runs scored, won the most games in the American League, had the second best ERA in their hard-hitting division. So this team never lost more than three games in a row all season, they just had a lot of heart.

And it was that consistency that brought the Red Sox into the postseason. But it was a drive to do more for the city that had their backs that took them on to win in the World Series. With the rallying symbol of "Boston Strong" mowed into the outfield and sewed into their uniforms, the Red Sox took the field against Tampa and Detroit with the full weight of their city behind them. When they found themselves in

game four of the World Series, down two games to one against St. Louis, the faithful cheered as Jonny Gomes knocked in a three-run homer out of the park, breaking open a tie and giving Red Sox Nation the signal, they weren't done yet.

Big Papi let it rip, earned the World Series MVP. Koji Uehara, the third-choice closer who had been signed as an afterthought, capped one of the best postseasons in major league history with his signature splitter that sank straight into David Ross's mitt to win the World Series, four games to two. And then Koji just looked so happy after every game, didn't he? [*Laughter*] Jumping up on people. [*Laughter*]

So they all stormed the field, readied the duck boats. But this was more than just a trophy and parade. With every game they played, the Sons of Fenway never forgot what it meant to wear the Boston uniform. When they visited bombing victims in the hospital, when they played ball with kids getting cancer treatment, when they started a program to help wounded warriors get treatment at Mass General, these guys were saying we're all on the same team. And I think Big Papi put it better and more colorfully than any of us could. [*Laughter*] I won't repeat his quote. [*Laughter*] But the point is, Boston and the Red Sox were one this season.

And we knew last year, even as we mourned the loss—the lost and cared for the wounded and resolved to carry on, that the moment would come when the Sox would be champions again and the crowds would gather for a parade down Boylston once more. And that's exactly what happened. That's how this team helped Boston to heal. And true to that spirit, in just a few weeks, something else we resolved last year will come to pass: On the third Monday in April, the world will return to Boston and run harder than ever and cheer louder than ever for the 118th Boston Marathon. That will happen.

Bottom line is, I'm proud of these guys. As a baseball fan, I appreciate their comeback season. But more importantly, as President, I'm grateful for their character and their embrace of the essential role they played in the spirit of that city. Sometimes, sports seems like it's trivial, it's just an entertainment. And then, every once in a while, you're reminded that sports represents something else and it has the power to bring people together like almost nothing can. And all of you should be very proud of what you accomplished. I know your fans are. And I'm grateful to you as well.

So congratulations to the Boston Red Sox and Red Sox Nation. Good luck this season. May the best Sox win. [*Laughter*]

All right. Come on. You guys have something for me? All right, come on. Big Papi has something for me.

First baseman David A. "Big Papi" Ortiz. Yes, sir.

[*At this point, Mr. Ortiz presented the President with a Boston Red Sox jersey.*]

The President. That looks pretty good.

Mr. Ortiz. Forty-four President.

The President. It looks like it may fit him better than me though. [*Laughter*] All right. Come on, let's get a good picture here. Come on.

Mr. Ortiz. Actually, do you mind if I take my own?

The President. Oh. He wants to do a selfie.

Mr. Ortiz. Yes, sir. [*Laughter*] Yes, sir.

The President. That's the Big Papi selfie. Come on.

[*Mr. Ortiz pulled out his cell phone and took a picture of himself and the President.*]

Audience member. Cha-ching! [*Applause*]

The President. Got it? That's great. Thank you. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chief Official White House Photographer Peter Souza; John W. Henry, principal owner, Thomas C. Werner, chairman, Larry Lucchino, president and chief executive officer, John Farrell, manager, Xander Bogaerts, shortstop, Shane Victorino, right fielder, Mike Napoli, first baseman, John

Lackey, Jon Lester, and Koji Uehara, pitchers, Jonny Gomes, left fielder, and David Ross, catcher, Boston Red Sox; Angela Faletra Menino, wife of former Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, MA; Adrianne Haslet-Davis, a professional dancer wounded in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing; and Reggie Donahue, son of Richard Donahue, an MBTA Transit Police Officer wounded in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing.

Remarks on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
April 1, 2014

Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you so much. Welcome to the White House.

Six months ago today, a big part of the Affordable Care Act kicked in as healthcare.gov and State insurance marketplaces went live. And millions of Americans finally had the same chance to buy quality, affordable health care—and the peace of mind that comes with it—as everybody else.

Last night, the first open enrollment period under this law came to an end. And despite several lost weeks out of the gate because of problems with the website, 7.1 million Americans have now signed up for private insurance plans through these marketplaces—[*applause*]—7.1.

Yes. [*Applause*] The truth is, even more folks want to sign up. So anybody who was stuck in line because of the huge surge of demand over the past few days can still go back and finish your enrollment—7.1 million, that's on top of the more than 3 million young adults who have gained insurance under this law by staying on their family's plan. That's on top of the millions more who have gained access through Medicaid expansion and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Making affordable coverage available to all Americans, including those with preexisting conditions, is now an important goal of this law.

And in these first 6 months, we've taken a big step forward. And just as importantly, this law is bringing greatersecurity to Americans who already have coverage. Because of the Affordable Care Act, a hundred million Americans have gained free preventive care, like mammograms and contraceptive care, under their existing plans. Because of this law, nearly 8 million seniors have saved almost $10 billion on their medicine because we've closed a gaping hole in Medicare's prescription drug plan. We're closing the doughnut hole. And because of this law, a whole lot of families won't be driven into bankruptcy by a serious illness, because the Affordable Care Act prevents your insurer from placing dollar limits on the coverage they provide.

These are all benefits that have been taking place for a whole lot of families out there, many who don't realize that they've received these benefits. But the bottom line is this: Under this law, the share of Americans with insurance is up, and the growth of health care costs is down, and that's good for our middle class, and that's good for our fiscal future.

Now, that doesn't mean that all the problems in health care have been solved forever. Premiums are still rising for families who have insurance, whether you get it through your employer or you buy it on your own. That's been true every year for decades. But so far, those premiums have risen more slowly since the Affordable Care Act passed than at any time in the past 50 years. It's also true that, despite this law, millions of Americans remain uncovered, in part because Governors in some States, for political reasons, have deliberately refused to expand coverage under this law. But we're going to work on them. And we'll work to get more Americans covered with each passing year.

And while it remains true that you'll still have to change your coverage if you graduate from college or turn 26 years old or move or switch jobs or have a child—just like you did before the Affordable Care Act was passed—you can now go to healthcare.gov and use it year-round to enroll when circumstances in your life change. So no, the Affordable Care Act hasn't completely fixed our long-broken

health care system, but this law has made our health care system a lot better. [*Applause*] A lot better.

All told, because of this law, millions of our fellow citizens know the economic security of health insurance who didn't just a few years ago, and that's something to be proud of. Regardless of your politics or your feelings about me or your feelings about this law, that's something that's good for our economy, and it's good for our country. And there's no good reason to go back.

Let me give you a sense of what this change has meant for millions of our fellow Americans. I'll just give you a few examples. Sean Casey, from Solana Beach, California, always made sure to cover his family on the private market. But preexisting medical conditions meant his annual tab was over $30,000. The Affordable Care Act changed that. See, if you have a preexisting condition, like being a cancer survivor, or if you suffer chronic pain from a tough job, or even if you've just been charged more for being a woman, you can no longer be charged more than anybody else. So this year, the Casey family's premiums will fall from over $30,000 to under $9,000.

And I know this because Sean took the time to write me a letter. "These savings," he said, "will almost offset the cost of our daughter's first year in college. I'm a big believer in this legislation, and it has removed a lot of complexity and, frankly, fear from my life. Please keep fighting for the ACA." That's what Sean had to say.

Jeanne Goe is a bartender from Enola, Pennsylvania. Now, I think most folks are aware, being a bartender, that's a job that usually doesn't offer health care. For years, Jeanne went uninsured or underinsured, often getting some health care through her local Planned Parenthood. In November, she bought a plan on the marketplace. In January, an illness sent her to the hospital. And because her new plan covered a CAT scan she wouldn't have otherwise been able to afford, her doctor discovered that she also had ovarian cancer and gave her a chance to beat it. So she wrote me a letter too. She said it's going to be "a long tough road to kill this cancer, but I can walk that road knowing insurance isn't an issue. I won't be refused care. I hope to send a follow-up letter in a few months saying I am free and clear of this disease, but until then, I know I will be fighting just as you have been fighting for my life as a working American citizen."

And after her first wellness visit under her new insurance plan, Marla Morine, from Fort Collins, Colorado, shared with me what it meant to her: "After using my new insurance for the first time, you probably heard my sigh of relief from the White House." [*Laughter*] "I felt like a human being again. I felt that I had value."

That's what the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, is all about: making sure that all of us, and all our fellow citizens, can count on the security of health care when we get sick; that the work and dignity of every person is acknowledged and affirmed. The newly insured, like Marla, deserve that dignity. Working Americans, like Jeanne, deserve that economic security. Women, the sick, survivors—they deserve fair treatment in our health care system, all of which makes the constant politics around this law so troubling.

Like every major piece of legislation, from Social Security to Medicare, the law is not perfect. We've had to make adjustments along the way, and the implementation—especially with the website—has had its share of problems. We know something about that. And yes, at times this reform has been contentious and confusing, and obviously, it's had its share of critics. That's part of what change looks like in a democracy. Change is hard. Fixing what's broken is hard. Overcoming skepticism and fear of something new is hard. A lot of times folks would prefer the devil they know to the devil they don't.

But this law is doing what it's supposed to do. It's working. It's helping people from coast to coast, all of which makes the lengths to which critics have gone to scare people or undermine the law or try to repeal the law without offering any plausible alternative so hard to understand. I've got to admit, I don't get it. Why are folks working so hard for people not

to have health insurance? Why are they so mad about the idea of folks having health insurance? Many of the tall tales that have been told about this law have been debunked. There are still no death panels. [*Laughter*] Armageddon has not arrived. Instead, this law is helping millions of Americans, and in the coming years, it will help millions more.

I've said before, I will always work with anyone who is willing to make this law work even better. But the debate over repealing this law is over. The Affordable Care Act is here to stay.

And those who have based their entire political agenda on repealing it have to explain to the country why Jeanne should go back to being uninsured. They should explain why Sean and his family should go back to paying thousands and thousands of dollars more. They've got to explain why Marla doesn't deserve to feel like she's got value. They have to explain why we should go back to the days when seniors paid more for their prescriptions or women had to pay more than men for coverage, back to the days when Americans with preexisting conditions were out of luck—they could routinely be denied the economic security of health insurance—because that's exactly what would happen if we repeal this law. Millions of people who now have health insurance would not have it. Seniors who have gotten discounts on their prescription drugs would have to pay more. Young people who were on their parent's plan would suddenly not have health insurance.

In the end, history is not kind to those who would deny Americans their basic economic security. Nobody remembers well those who stand in the way of America's progress or our people. And that's what the Affordable Care Act represents. As messy as it's been sometimes, as contentious as it's been sometimes, it is progress. It is making sure that we are not the only advanced country on Earth that doesn't make sure everybody has basic health care. And that's thanks in part to leaders like Nancy Pelosi and Dick Durbin and all the Members of Congress who are here today. We could not have done it without them, and they should be proud of what they've done. [*Applause*] They should be proud of what they've done.

And it's also thanks to the often unheralded work of countless Americans who fought tirelessly to pass this law and who organized like crazy these past few months to help their fellow citizens just get the information they needed to get covered. That's why we're here today. That's why 7.1 million folks have health insurance, because people got the word out.

And our—we didn't make a hard sell. We didn't have billions of dollars of commercials like some critics did. [*Laughter*] But what we said was, look for yourself, see if it's good for your family. And a whole lot of people decided it was. So I want to thank everybody who worked so hard to make sure that we arrived at this point today.

Now, I want to make sure everybody understands: In the months, years ahead, I guarantee you, there will be additional challenges to implementing this law. There will be days when the website stumbles, I guarantee it. So, press, just—I want you to anticipate—[*laughter*]—there will be some moment when the website is down, and I know it will be on all your front pages. It's going to happen. It won't be news. There will be parts of the law that will still need to be improved. And if we can stop refighting old political battles that keep us gridlocked, then we could actually make the law work even better for everybody. And we're excited about the prospect of doing that. We are game to do it.

But today should remind us that the goal we set for ourselves—that no American should go without the health care that they need; that no family should be bankrupt because somebody in that family gets sick, because no parent should have to be worried about whether they can afford treatment because they're worried that they don't want to have to burden their children; the idea that everybody in this country can get decent health care—that goal is achievable.

We are on our way. And if all of us have the courage and the wisdom to keep working not against one another, not to scare each other, but for one another, then we won't just make

progress on health care. We'll make progress on all the other work that remains to create new opportunity for everybody who works for it and to make sure that this country that we love lives up to its highest ideals. That's what today is about. That's what all the days that come as long as I'm President are going to be about. That's what we're going to be working towards.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:19 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Memorandum on Pelly Certification and Icelandic Whaling
April 1, 2014

Memorandum for the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the United States Trade Representative, the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, and the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers

Subject: Pelly Certification and Icelandic Whaling

On January 31, 2014, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell certified under section 8 of the Fisherman's Protective Act of 1967 (the "Pelly Amendment")(22 U.S.C. 1978), that nationals of Iceland are conducting trade in whale meat and products that diminishes the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In her letter, Secretary Jewell expressed her concern for these actions, and I share these concerns.

To ensure that this issue continues to receive the highest level of attention, and in accordance with an interagency-developed set of recommendations, I direct: (1) relevant departments and agencies to raise concerns with Iceland's trade in whale parts and products in appropriate CITES fora and processes and, in consultation with other international actors, to seek additional measures to reduce such trade and enhance the effectiveness of CITES; (2) relevant senior Administration officials and U.S. delegations meeting with Icelandic officials to raise U.S. objections to commercial whaling and Iceland's ongoing trade in fin whale parts and products and to urge a halt to such action, including immediate notification of this position to the Government of Iceland; (3) the Department of State and other relevant departments and agencies to encourage Iceland to develop and expand measures that increase economic opportunities for the nonlethal uses of whales in Iceland, such as responsible whale watching activities and educational and scientific research activities that contribute to the conservation of whales; (4) the Department of State to re-examine bilateral cooperation projects and, where appropriate, to base U.S. cooperation with Iceland on the Icelandic government changing its whaling policy, abiding by the International Whaling Commission moratorium on commercial whaling, and not engaging in trade in whale parts and products in a manner that diminishes the effectiveness of CITES; (5) the Department of State to inform the Government of Iceland that the United States will continue to monitor the activities of Icelandic companies that engage in commercial whaling and international trade in whale parts and products; (6) Cabinet secretaries and other senior Administration officials to evaluate the appropriateness of visits to Iceland in light of Iceland's resumption of fin

whaling and ongoing trade in fin whale parts and products; and (7) relevant departments and agencies to examine other options for responding to continued whaling by Iceland.

It is my expectation that departments and agencies make substantive progress implementing the actions outlined above. To this end, within 6 months, I direct departments and agencies to report to me on their actions through the Departments of State, Commerce, and the Interior.

I believe that continuing focus on Icelandic whaling activities is needed to encourage Iceland to halt commercial whaling and support international conservation efforts. Just as the United States made the transition from a commercial whaling nation to a whale watching nation, we must enhance our engagement with Iceland to facilitate this change.

BARACK OBAMA

Message to the Congress on Pelly Certification and Icelandic Whaling
April 1, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

On January 31, 2014, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell certified under section 8 of the Fisherman's Protective Act of 1967 (the "Pelly Amendment")(22 U.S.C. 1978), that nationals of Iceland are conducting trade in whale meat and products that diminishes the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This message constitutes my notification to the Congress consistent with subsection (b) of the Pelly Amendment.

This is the third certification by United States Government agencies of Iceland for their continued whaling activities. In 2004, Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans made a certification regarding Iceland under the Pelly Amendment because its scientific whaling program diminished the effectiveness of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). When Iceland resumed commercial whaling in 2006, Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez continued Iceland's certification. In 2011, Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke increased actions to be taken by members of the Cabinet, Federal departments and agencies, and U.S. delegations by again certifying Iceland for diminishing the effectiveness of the IWC.

A single Icelandic company, Hvalur hf, conducts fin whaling. Iceland does not consume most of these fin whales; rather, they are exported, mainly to Japan. Iceland's commercial harvest of fin whales escalated dramatically in 2009 and 2010, was suspended in 2011 and 2012 due to difficulties in the Japanese market after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, and resumed in 2013. Between 1987 and 2008, Iceland hunted a total of 7 fin whales. In 2009, Iceland hunted 125 fin whales, followed by 148 in 2010, zero in the years 2011–2012, and 134 fin whales in 2013. On December 16, 2013, Iceland set its 2014–2019 fin whale quota at 154 fin whales per year, an increase in its previous yearly whaling quota. According to the IWC, a harvest of 46 fin whales in the North Atlantic is biologically sustainable.

Iceland's actions jeopardize the survival of the fin whale, which is listed in CITES among the species most threatened with extinction, and they undermine multilateral efforts to ensure greater worldwide protection for whales. Specifically, Iceland's continued commercial whaling and recent trade in whale products diminish the effectiveness of CITES because: (1) Iceland's commercial harvest of fin whales undermines the goal of CITES to ensure that international trade in species of animals and plants does not threaten their survival in the wild; and (2) Iceland's current fin whale harvest and quota exceeds catch levels that the IWC's scientific body advised were sustainable.

In her letter of January 31, 2014, Secretary Jewell expressed her concern for Iceland's actions, and I share these concerns. Just as the United States made the transition from a com-

mercial whaling nation to a whale watching nation, we must enhance our engagement to facilitate this change by Iceland.

To ensure that this issue continues to receive the highest level of attention, I have directed: (1) relevant U.S. agencies to raise concerns with Iceland's trade in whale parts and products in appropriate CITES fora and processes, and, in consultation with other international actors, to seek additional measures to reduce such trade and enhance the effectiveness of CITES; (2) relevant senior Administration officials and U.S. delegations meeting with Icelandic officials to raise U.S. objections to commercial whaling and Iceland's ongoing trade in fin whale parts and products and to urge a halt to such action, including immediate notification of this position to the Government of Iceland; (3) the Department of State and other relevant agencies to encourage Iceland to develop and expand measures that increase economic opportunities for the nonlethal uses of whales in Iceland, such as responsible whale watching activities and educational and scientific research activities that contribute to the conservation of whales; (4) the Department of State to re-examine bilateral cooperation projects, and where appropriate, to base U.S. cooperation with Iceland on the Icelandic government changing its whaling policy, abiding by the IWC moratorium on commercial whaling, and not engaging in trade in whale parts and products in a manner that diminishes the effectiveness of CITES; (5) the Department of State to inform the Government of Iceland that the United States will continue to monitor the activities of Icelandic companies that engage in commercial whaling and international trade in whale parts and products; (6) Cabinet secretaries and other senior Administration officials to evaluate the appropriateness of visits to Iceland in light of Iceland's resumption of fin whaling and ongoing trade in fin whale parts and products; (7) relevant departments and agencies to examine other options for responding to continued whaling by Iceland; and (8) all relevant departments and agencies to report on their actions, within 6 months of certification, and any updates as needed beyond, through the Departments of State and the Interior. In addition, previous Pelly certifications of Iceland, and the direction to take actions pursuant to those certifications, remain in effect. I concur with the recommendation, as presented by the Secretary of the Interior, to pursue the use of non-trade measures and that the actions outlined above are the appropriate course of action to address this issue. Accordingly, I am not directing the Secretary of the Treasury to impose trade measures on Icelandic products for the whaling activities that led to the certification by the Secretary of the Interior.

The Departments of State, Commerce, and the Interior will continue to monitor and encourage Iceland to revise its policies regarding commercial whaling. Further, within 6 months, I have directed relevant departments and agencies to report to me through the Departments of State, Commerce, and the Interior on their actions. I believe that continuing focus on Icelandic whaling activities is needed to encourage Iceland to halt commercial whaling and support international conservation efforts.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
April 1, 2014.

Remarks at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan
April 2, 2014

The President. Hello, Michigan! Go Blue! Well, this is a good-looking crowd. Just happy to be out of class. I'm sure that's not true. I'm sure it's—these are all outstanding students. [*Applause*] Good to see you.

First of all, give Mira a big round of applause for the great introduction. I want to say thanks to your president, Mary Sue Coleman, for her years of outstanding leadership here at Michigan. We've got a few other Michigan

leaders who are here today. We've got Congressman John Conyers. We've got Congressman Gary Peters. We've got your mayor, John Hieftje. Former Congressman Mark Schauer. Your Congressman, the legendary John Dingell, could not make it, but his wife Debbie is here. Give her a big round of applause.

Now, most importantly, I know to all of you, we've got some Wolverines in the house here. We've got Glenn Robinson III. We've got Jordan Morgan. We've got Big Ten Player of the Year Nik Stauskas. And we've got quarterback Devin Gardner. These guys were outstanding this year. Give them a bigger round of applause than that. They—[*applause*].

You guys had a great run. That last game was as good of a game as we've seen the entire season. I know you wish that that it turned out a little bit later; if you'd had 5 more seconds, it would have been helpful. [*Laughter*] But I wanted to congratulate the coach, Coach Beilein, and the team for a great season.

And I understand that Jordan wanted me to talk about my bracket. [*Laughter*] My bracket's a mess. [*Laughter*] I've learned my lesson: I will not pick against the Wolverines. I've learned my lesson. [*Laughter*] It's not going to happen. This is the problem with doing these brackets: People just trash-talk you nonstop. [*Laughter*] It's terrible.

And I think it's worth mentioning, I want to congratulate Jordan for playing more games at Michigan than any other player in history, not only earning an undergraduate degree in engineering—[*applause*]—pursuing a graduate degree in engineering as well. That's the kind of student athlete we're talking about, sir. Proud of him. [*Applause*] Proud of him.

Now, do some of you guys have chairs? Because if you've got chairs, feel free to sit down. But if you don't, don't sit down, because I don't want you getting hurt.

The—before I came here today, I stopped at Zingerman's, which is the right thing to do when you're in Ann Arbor. [*Laughter*] I stopped for two reasons. The first is, the Reuben is killer. [*Laughter*] So I ordered, like, the small—[*laughter*]—and it didn't look that small. So I gave half to Valerie Jarrett, who's traveling with us. And then, after I finished the half, I wanted the half back. [*Laughter*] But it was too late. All she had left was the pickle. [*Laughter*] So I took the pickle. [*Laughter*]

But—so one of the reasons I went was because the sandwiches are outstanding. The second reason, though, is, Zingerman's is a business that treats its workers well and rewards honest work with honest wages. And that's worth celebrating. And that's what I'm here to talk about today: How do we rebuild an economy that creates jobs and opportunities for every American? And I want to focus on something a lot of people in Michigan are working very hard to accomplish right now, and that is, raising the minimum wage to help more folks get ahead.

Now, here's the context. Our economy is doing better. It's growing. Our businesses are creating jobs, 8.7 million new jobs over the past 4 years. Our manufacturing sector, which had been losing jobs throughout the nineties and throughout the—what do you call it—aughts? [*Laughter*] You know, the 2000 to 2010, whatever you call that. [*Laughter*]

But manufacturing had been losing jobs—about a third of manufacturing had lost—and obviously, that had hit Michigan really hard. But we're now seeing the manufacturing sector add jobs for the first time since the 1990s. So that is good news. Housing market is recovering. Obviously, the stock market has recovered, which means people's 401(k)s, if they have them, are doing a lot better.

Troops that were fighting two wars, they're coming home. We just went through the first month since 2003 where no U.S. soldier was killed in either Afghanistan or Iraq.

Today, you've got companies looking to invest in the U.S. instead of sending jobs overseas. They want to create more jobs and invest right here in the United States. We're more competitive. We're more productive.

Oh, and by the way, 7.1 million Americans have now signed up for coverage through the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare. That's a lot of people—7.1. That's enough to fill up the Big House 65 times. And by the way, that doesn't count the more than 3

million young people who have been able to stay on their parents' plans. So we have seniors here who graduate, and then it may take a couple months to find a job, or you're doing an internship or something that does not provide health care. You're going to be covered until you get that job that actually provides health insurance. So it provides you the kind of protection you need.

So that's the good news. We've fought back from the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes. We've laid the foundation for America's future growth. But here's the problem: There's been a long-term trend that has really been hitting middle class folks and folks trying to get into the middle class, and that's been going on since before most of you were born. The economy increasingly has folks at the top doing really well, but then middle class families, people who are struggling to get into the middle class, they're working harder, but their wages, their incomes aren't going up.

And we're a better country than that. In America, we do not believe in opportunity just for the few. We believe that everybody should have a chance at success. Everybody. And we believe our economy grows best not from the top down, but from the middle out and from the bottom up. And we want to make sure that no matter where you're born, what circumstances, how you started out, what you look like, what your last name is, who you love, it doesn't matter; you can succeed. That's what we believe.

We believe that what matters is the strength of our work ethic and the scope of our dreams and our willingness to take responsibility for ourselves, but also for others. That's what America is about. That's the promise that this country is built on. And for the sake of your generation, we've got to make sure that that continues to be the case; that that's not just something we're nostalgic about; that that's something that we project out into the future.

So I had a State of the Union a while back, and I laid out a four-part opportunity agenda to make sure everybody has a shot. And that starts with something I know graduating seniors are thinking about: more good jobs paying good wages, jobs in high tech and manufacturing and energy and innovation. And there are things we can do to create jobs: rebuilding our infrastructure in this country, investing in R&D, closing wasteful loopholes that don't create jobs. So we're providing tax breaks to companies that are creating jobs right here in the United States. Those are things we can do right now.

Opportunity means training more Americans for the skills needed to fill those jobs. We've got to make sure everybody is ready with the skills they need. Not everybody is going to be lucky enough to be a Wolverine and graduate from Michigan. But everybody can get a good, solid base so that they can have a job and a career.

Opportunity means guaranteeing every young people access to a world-class education, and that's got to start with pre-K, all the way through higher education. And it means making college more affordable.

Some of you may not know this, but before a lot of you even entered college, we took on the student loan system. It was giving billions of taxpayer dollars to big banks to serve as middlemen in the student loan process. We said, why do we need the banks? We cut them out. We used the savings that were generated, billions of dollars, to expand the grants that help millions of low-income students pay for college. And we're offering millions of students who are graduating the chance to cap monthly student loan payments at 10 percent of your income.

This is something you need to talk to your counselors about, especially if you're going into teaching or social work or other professions where it's a passion, but you're not going to be in an investment banker salary situation. So make sure you find out about this. You can cap—I mean, I know Stauskas has got the contract coming up, so he'll—[*laughter*]—he doesn't have to worry about these things. But I'm saying later; I'm not telling him to leave. [*Laughter*] I wasn't editorializing on that. [*Laughter*]

My point is, we've got to make sure that everybody can afford to do things that may not

pay huge sums of money, but are really valuable to society.

And the good news is more young people are earning college degrees than ever before. But we've still got to do more work to rein in tuition costs. I talked to your president about this. And we've got to help more students who are trapped by student loan debt, because this country cannot afford striving young people to be priced out of a higher education. Everybody has got to be able to afford it.

Now, finally, opportunity means rewarding the hard work of every American—not just some Americans, every American. That means making sure that folks are paid equal for doing equal work. We—I do not want my daughters paid less than somebody else's sons for doing the same job.

It means making sure that there are decent benefits and, at minimum, that every American has access to quality, affordable health insurance. It means paychecks and wages that allow you to support a family.

All of which brings me back to this issue of the minimum wage, giving America a raise. Now, raising the minimum wage is not going to solve all of our economic challenges. The majority of folks who are working get paid more than the minimum wage. As Americans, we understand that some people will earn more than others. But here's one thing we do believe: Nobody who works full time should be raising their family in poverty, right? If you're working, if you're responsible, you should be able to pay the rent, pay the bills.

But that's what's happening right now. All across the country, you can work full time on the minimum wage and still be in poverty. And that's why, in the year since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, we've seen six States, on their own, pass laws to raise their minimum wage. Last week, Connecticut became the first State in the country to raise its minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. [*Applause*] Congratulations, Connecticut.

You've got more States and counties and cities that are working to raise their minimum wage as we speak. That includes your State legislators from Ann Arbor—Adam Zemke and Jeff Irwin—who are trying to raise it here in Michigan. We're proud of them. Stand up, guys. Come on. [*Applause*] There they are. See, I used to be in the State legislature, so I was kind of partial to—[*laughter*].

But raising wages is not just a job for organizers, it's not just a job for elected officials, it's also a job for business. It was here in Michigan a hundred years ago that Henry Ford announced he was doubling his workers' wages. And at the time, some of his fellow business leaders thought he had lost his mind. But Henry Ford understood it was going to be good for business. Not only did it boost productivity, not only did it reduce turnover, not only did it make employees more loyal to the company, but it meant that the workers could afford to buy the cars that they were building. So you were building—so by paying your workers more, you were building your own market for your products.

And hugely successful companies today, like Costco, they take the same approach. And it's not just big businesses, small businesses too. In my State of the Union Address, I called on more business leaders to boost their employees' wages, give them a fair wage. And since then, you've seen businesses across the country—small ones, like an ice cream parlor in Florida, to a marketing agency in Georgia, to a pizzeria in St. Louis—they've all said, you know what, this is the right thing to do.

Recently, the Gap decided to raise its base wages, and that benefited about 65,000 workers in the United States—and it led me to go shopping at Gap. [*Laughter*] Some of you may have seen the very attractive sweaters that I purchased for my daughters. [*Laughter*] They have not worn them yet, so if they're listening, make me feel good, just wear it one time. [*Laughter*]

Now, Zingerman's does not have as many workers as the Gap, obviously, but they try to do right by each and every one of them. You've got some big businesses who go to Washington to lobby for special treatment for themselves. So one of Zingerman's owners, Paul Saginaw, flew to DC to lobby for his workers, to lobby for better treatment for workers through a

higher minimum wage. That's the kind of folks who are running Zingerman's.

Then afterwards, he held a sandwich summit here in Ann Arbor to help build support for Michigan's minimum wage going up. And Paul's point is simple: Fair wages and higher profits are not mutually exclusive, they can go hand in hand. That's what Henry Ford understood. And Paul opened Zingerman's doors 32 years ago last month, so he knows a little bit about business. But he and business owners like him believe higher wages are good for the bottom line.

I happen to believe the same thing. So I decided several months ago that the Federal Government should follow their lead. And so I issued anExecutive order that requires Federal contractors, folks who are doing business with the Government, to pay their employees on new contracts a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. It's the right thing to do.

And I'm determined to do my part to lift wages, improve take-home pay any way I can. My attitude is, if you cook our troops' meals, you wash their dishes, your country should pay you a living wage.

Now, here's the challenge. What Zingerman's can do on its own, what even I can do as the head of the executive branch of the Federal Government, that doesn't reach everybody. If we're going to do right by our fellow Americans, we need Congress to get on board. We've got to have Congress to get on board. We've got to have State legislators to get on board. Because even though we're bringing manufacturing jobs back to America, we're creating more good-paying jobs in education and health care and business services, there are always going to be folks who do critical work, who bust their tails every day—airport workers, restaurant workers, and hospital workers, and retail salespeople—who deserve an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. They're doing necessary jobs. They should be able to make a living.

So right now there is a bill before Congress that would boost America's minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. It's easy to remember: 10–10. Ten-ten. [*Laughter*] Passing this bill would not just raise wages for minimum wage workers; it would help lift wages for nearly 28 million Americans, including nearly a million people right here in Michigan. It would lift millions of people out of poverty right away. It would help millions more work their way out of poverty right away.

It wouldn't require any new taxes. It doesn't require new spending. It doesn't require new bureaucracy. But what it would do is help those families and give businesses more customers with more money to spend. And it would help grow the economy for everybody.

So you would think this would be a no-brainer. Politically, you'd think that folks would be rushing to do this. Nearly three in four Americans support raising the minimum wage—nearly three in four. Here's the problem. Republicans in Congress—not Republicans out in America, because some of them get paid the minimum wage, so they want to see it raised—Republicans in Congress don't want to vote to raise it at all. In fact, some want to just scrap the minimum wage. All right? One House Republican said, "It's outlived its usefulness."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, that's what he said.

Audience member. Boo!

The President. No, no, no. Don't boo, organize. [*Laughter*] So the—[*applause*]. That's what you need to do, because they may not hear the boos, but they can read a petition, and they can see votes.

You've got some Republicans saying we shouldn't raise the minimum wage because—they've said this—because, well, it just helps young people. Now, first of all, I think it's pretty good to help young people. I don't know what's wrong with helping young people. I mean, folks who say that, next thing you know, they'll say, "Get off my lawn." [*Laughter*] I think it's okay to help young people.

But the fact is, most people who would benefit from a higher minimum wage are not teenagers taking on their first job. The average age of folks getting paid the minimum wage is 35. A majority of lower wage jobs are held by women. Many of them work full time, often to support a family.

And by the way, what's wrong with helping young people get ahead? [*Laughter*] Mira puts herself through college on a base wage of less than $3 an hour, because she's working in a restaurant. She works hard. [*Applause*] She does. So we should be making it easier for your generation to gain a foothold on the ladder of opportunity. We shouldn't be making it harder.

Now, the truth is, the Republicans' refusal so far to raise the minimum wage is pretty consistent with their general worldview—[*laughter*]—no, which says—it says basically you're on your own, government doesn't have a role to play in making sure that the marketplace is working for everybody.

Just yesterday Republicans in Congress put forward a budget for the country that I believe would shrink opportunity for your generation. It starts by giving a massive tax cut to households making more than $1 million a year, the very folks who've benefited the most over the last 20 years from this economy that is benefiting people at the top. Then, so they don't blow a hole in the deficit, they'd have to raise taxes on middle class families with kids. Then, they'd force deep cuts to the investments that help our economy grow, like research and clean energy, and investments in middle class families, like education and job training.

Now, when they put these budgets together, usually they don't tell you exactly what they'd cut, because they know you wouldn't like it. So you have to kind of do the math. But compared to my budget, if they cut everything evenly in the amounts that they're talking about, within a few years about 170,000 kids would get cut from early childhood education. About 200,000 new moms and children would get cut off from the programs that help them to get healthy food. Funding for 21,000 special education teachers would be cut off. And if they wanted to make smaller cuts in any of these other—in any one of these areas, they'd have to make bigger cuts in others. It even cuts Pell grants, which makes it harder for students to pay for a college education.

And—now, to give them credit, they do have one original idea, which is to repeal Obamacare—[*laughter*]—because they haven't tried that 50 times. Fifty times they've tried to do that. [*Laughter*] So that means they would take away health coverage not only for more than 7 million Americans who've done the responsible thing, signed up, bought health care for themselves and their families, but for the 3 million young adults who've been able to stay on their parent's plan under this law. What I just told you about being able to stay on your parent's plan, the Republicans don't like that.

And their budget guts the rules we put in place to protect middle class families from another financial crisis like the one that we've endured. So if this all sounds familiar, it should be familiar because it was their economic plan in the 2012 campaign; it was their economic plan in 2010. It's like that movie "Groundhog Day"—[*laughter*]—except it's not funny. If they tried to sell this sandwich at Zingerman's, they'd have to call it the Stinkburger or the Meanwich. [*Laughter*]

You know, look, here's the truth. They're not necessarily cold hearted, they just sincerely believe that if we give more tax breaks to a fortunate few and we invest less in the middle class and we reduce or eliminate the safety net for the poor and the sick and we cut food stamps and we cut Medicaid and we let banks and polluters and credit card companies and insurers do only what's best for their bottom line without the responsibility to the rest of us, then somehow, the economy will boom, and jobs and prosperity will trickle down to everybody.

And when I say it that way, I know it sounds like I'm exaggerating, except I'm not. This is their theory. They're pretty unabashed about it. And it's not a new theory. They've held it for decades, through good times and bad. They were making the same argument against FDR when he was setting up Social Security.

And look, it does create opportunity for a handful of people who are already doing really, really well. But we believe in opportunity for everybody, more good jobs for everybody, more workers to fill those jobs, a world-class education for everybody, hard work that pays off with wages you can live on and savings you can retire on and health care you can count on.

That's what opportunity for all means. [*Applause*] That's what it means.

Now, next week, Members of Congress have a fresh chance to show which side they're on. They're going to get a yes-or-no vote on raising the minimum wage all across this country. And they've got to make a clear choice: Talk the talk about valuing hard-working families, or walk the walk and actually value hard-working families. You've got a choice: You can give America the shaft, or you can give it a raise.

Here in Michigan, your Senators, Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, your Representatives, John Dingell and John Conyers and Gary Peters, they are already on board. But every American deserves to know where their elected representatives stand on this choice. So those of you—if you're going back home for spring break or something or—did that already happen, spring break?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I'm sorry. [*Laughter*] Everybody is all, aw, yeah. [*Laughter*] Well, I hope you had a good time. [*Laughter*] But if you have the chance to talk to a Congressman who's not supporting it, you need to ask him, do you support raising the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour? And if they say yes, then you should say thank you because elected officials do not hear that very often. When they do the right thing, you should reward them.

Audience member. Thank you, President Obama!

The President. You're welcome. Thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you. [*Laughter*]

Now, if they say no, you shouldn't yell at them. Be polite. Ask them why not. Ask them to reconsider. Tell them to join the rest of the country. For once, instead of just saying no, say yes. It's time for $10.10. It's time to give America a raise.

As I'm looking out at all of you I'm reminded, 4 years ago I had the privilege of delivering the commencement address at the university, over in the big stadium. And I said our democracy, it's always been noisy, it's always been messy. We have big arguments. But in the end, we've always had the ability to look past our differences and our disagreements and forge a common future. And we've got common values: hard work, responsibility, pursuing your individual dreams.

What the argument is right now about is whether we also affirm the values that make sure we've giving everybody a chance; making sure our fellow citizens can also pursue their dreams; that we're not just looking out for ourselves all the time, but we're also looking out for the person next to you. That's also what America is about. That's what we have to do again.

We've got more jobs to create. We've got more kids to educate. We've got more clean energy to create. We've got more troops to bring home. We've got more veterans to care for. We've got an immigration system we've got to fix. We've got to build a middle class. We've got to give opportunity for everybody who strives for it. We've got to make sure everybody—Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, with or without a disability, folks in the inner city, folks outside the borders of the city—everybody has got a chance. America is a place for everybody. That's what we're fighting for. That's what I need you to get out there and talk about.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:52 p.m. in the Intramural Sports Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mira Friedlander, student, University of Michigan; Glenn A. Robinson III and Jordan D. Morgan, forwards, Nikolas T. Stauskas, guard, and John Beilein, head coach, University of Michigan men's basketball team; Devin Gardner, quarterback, University of Michigan football team; and Rep. Joseph L. Barton.

Remarks on the Shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, From Chicago, Illinois
April 2, 2014

Hello, everybody. I just got off the phone with Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Sandy Winnefeld to get the latest report on the situation in Fort Hood. Obviously, we're

following it closely. The situation is fluid right now. But my national security team is in close contact with not just the Defense Department, but the FBI. They are working with folks on the ground to determine exactly what happened to make sure that everybody is secure. And I want to just assure all of us that we're going to get to the bottom of exactly what happened.

Any shooting is troubling. Obviously, this reopens the pain of what happened at Fort Hood 5 years ago. We know these families. We know their incredible service to our country and the sacrifices that they make. Obviously, our thoughts and prayers were—are with the entire community. And we are going to do everything we can to make sure that the community at Fort Hood has what it needs to deal with the current situation, but also any potential aftermath.

We're heartbroken that something like this might have happened again. And I don't want to comment on the facts until I know exactly what has happened, but for now, I would just hope that everybody across the country is keeping the families and the community of Fort Hood in our thoughts and in our prayers. The folks there have sacrificed so much on behalf of our freedom. Many of the people there have been on multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. They serve with valor, and they serve with distinction. And when they're at their home base, they need to feel safe. We don't yet know what happened tonight, but obviously, that sense of safety has been broken once again. And we're going to have to find out exactly what happened.

The Pentagon will undoubtedly have further briefings for you as we get more details about what happened. All right?

Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:46 p.m. at Chicago Cut Steakhouse.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Chicago
April 2, 2014

So, first of all, Grace and Craig have been just incredible friends and supporters for a really long time. And I just want to say thank you. And thanks, guys, for letting us crash your house. [*Laughter*]

I do think that the story Grace told is partly about roots and family and where do you start off. And I have to tell you, as I look around this room, I'm reminded of all the pieces of myself that are connected to individuals in this room. There are people who have been friends of mine for a couple of decades now. There are folks here who have been with me when nobody gave me a chance to even get to the U.S. Senate, much less the Presidency. There are people here who have been to Michelle and my wedding and have been at Mom N Tots watching our kids waddle around. [*Laughter*]

And so to have friends like this, to be home like this, even when the weather is like this—[*laughter*]—is invigorating, and it reminds you of why you got into this business in the first place. Because you got a lot of people here who have taught me a lot about community and friendship and family, and for that reason, I'm just really grateful, and I just want to say thank you to all of you.

I want to acknowledge our outstanding Governor of the great State of Illinois, Pat Quinn. I want to thank Henry Muñoz, who, although stuffed in a corner at the moment—[*laughter*]—actually has been working tirelessly on behalf of Democrats. It is a thankless job, but he does it with good humor and grace, and he is a great friend, so we're so glad that he came up here.

I was a little bit late. Some of you may have heard there was another shooting at Fort Hood. We don't know the details, but we're monitoring the situation carefully. So I'm not going to give a long speech. I want to spend most of the time that I'm here answering questions and hearing from all of you.

Let me just say a couple of general points. First of all, the economy has bounced back in a way that is not only there yet, but when you

compare it to what's happened in other countries around the world, is pretty significant. We have seen 8.7 million new jobs created since I took office. We have seen a creation—the recovery of trillions of dollars of wealth because people's 401(k)s have bounced back and housing prices have begun to bounce back. The unemployment rate is lower than at any time since 2007. Health care costs are rising at a slower rate. Our energy production is up. Our exports are on pace potentially to double. There's a lot of good stuff going on. Our manufacturing base has, after a couple of decades of sloughing off jobs, is now actually hiring folks back again. And obviously, the auto industry has come roaring back.

So there's a good story to tell. But as I said at the State of the Union, there's some long-term trends in our economy that we have not yet fixed. And what it comes down to is the fact that—in part because of globalization, in part because of technology, but also in part because of some long-term Government policies—we have an economy now in which folks at the very top are doing very, very well, but folks in the middle haven't seen their incomes or wages go up in a very long time. And folks who are fighting to get into the middle class find that there are fewer and fewer ladders of opportunity.

And that is a problem for all us, even if you're doing well. Because the premise in this country has always been that we grow best when our growth is broad based, when everybody has got a shot; when Grace's parents come here and they're able to—through hard work and responsibility and transmitting values to their kids—they're able to succeed. And one of the great things about Chicago is, is that although folks usually didn't come here right first—they tended to go through one of the coasts typically—this is a city of immigrants. And the story of Chicago has been starting off with nothing and building something. And when I look throughout this room, it's filled with people who lived out that story.

And I want to make sure that story is true for the next generation and the generation after that and the generation after that, because that is what makes America great. Obviously, in the news lately has been the whole situation in Ukraine and Russia. And I've had to explain to people, Russia's moving troops into Ukraine wasn't a sign of strength, it was a sign of weakness. Because you've got a country that isn't attracting people from the outside, a population that's shrinking. It feels surrounded, in part because people look at the West and they look at Europe and they look at America and they say, this is a place where, if we put in effort, without connections, without being born to the right place, without having to pay a bribe, we might be able to succeed. Whether it's setting up a cheesecake business—[*laughter*]—or it is going into the helping professions, we can succeed. And we have to make sure that that continues for the next generation.

Now, the good news is, we know how to do it. It's not as if there's a mystery here. We know that if we invest in early childhood education, then every kid can succeed. We know that if we make college affordable, then this could be the best trained workforce in the country. We know that if we rebuild our infrastructure, we can put people to work right now rebuilding our roads, our bridges, our sewer systems, our airports, our ports, setting up smart grids. There are a bunch of folks that right away could get to work, and suddenly, they've got money in their pockets, and they'd be spending that money on businesses all across Chicago, all across the country.

We know that we have to invest in research and development. We know that immigration reform isn't just good for the families, but it keeps on bringing dynamic, energized folks to our country. It's one of our biggest comparative advantages to other countries, including Europe and Asia, is that we've got a relatively young population, because folks who are hungry keep on wanting to come here, and it keeps our economy vibrant.

And we know that when we pay workers a living wage, when we make sure that women are getting paid the same as men, when they've got decent benefits, when they have the financial security of having health insurance so they don't go bankrupt when they get sick, we know

all those things make people more productive and the entire economy grows.

So we know what to do. The problem is, right now Congress isn't willing or capable of doing it. And that's why you being here tonight is so important and why even though I promised Michelle that 2012 was going to be my last campaign, actually, this one is my last campaign. [*Laughter*]

We need to hang on to the Senate. We need to pick up seats in the House. We need to make sure that the public knows very clearly what is at stake in this election. And it's hard during midterms, because Democrats have a tendency to get really excited during Presidential years, and then during the midterms, we go into hibernation.

And that's why you being here tonight is so important. That's why what's Henry is doing is so important. And that's why we're so grateful for what Grace and Craig are doing, is so important. Because our agenda, our values, the things that we care about—things, by the way, that the majority of Americans by and large agree with up and down the line—can only happen if we've got a Congress that is prepared to work, to engage constructively in debate and have some differences, but also say there are some things that go beyond politics. That's what we're fighting for. And that's why all of you being here tonight is something I truly, truly appreciate, in addition to just seeing some old friends.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:34 p.m. at the residence of Grace Tsao-Wu and Craig Freedman. In his remarks, he referred to Henry R. Muñoz III, national finance committee chair, Democratic National Committee. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for the 2014 United States Olympic and Paralympic Teams
April 3, 2014

The First Lady. Hey, everybody. [*Laughter*] Welcome to the White House! I know you guys have been standing for a while, but you're athletes, you can handle it. [*Laughter*]

We are so excited to have Team U.S.A. here with us today. But before we begin, I just want to take a moment to acknowledge the Fort Hood community that, as many of you know, has experienced yet another devastating tragedy. And we just want to make sure that folks there know that our thoughts and prayers are with all of those who lost loved ones and friends, as well as those that were injured.

Because I know that many of the athletes here today are veterans themselves, and when something like this happens, it touches all of us. I know that the President and I are just torn apart when things like this happen. So today, as we celebrate the Olympic spirit, we remember that the same spirit—the spirit of hard work and team work—is shared by our military men and women, and we stand with them today and every day.

So now let's get into the "you guys" thing. [*Laughter*] Today, after watching you guys all over TV all these couple of months, I have to say that I am truly amazed. I shared some of this with you guys in the receiving line. You all are so talented. You're dedicated, and honestly, sometimes, I don't know how you do it. I really don't.

I have watched you guys do some of the craziest stuff. That's the thing with the Winter Olympics. You guys do crazy things—[*laughter*]—careening down the face of mountains. Craziness! [*Laughter*] Throwing each other up in the air, it's like—the mixed-pair skaters, the women, they're teeny. The big guys take them and throw them, just throw them across the ice. I'm, like, are you kidding me? [*Laughter*] You threw her so hard, and she lands on one foot on a blade. And those of you jumping on those cookie sheet things and just sliding down

a mountain—[*laughter*]—80 miles an hour. I mean, who thinks of that? [*Laughter*]

So I am really in awe of everything you do, as so many people here in America and across the globe are. Again and again, you all showed us that being an Olympian is about heart, it's about guts, and it's about giving it your all no matter what stands in your way. And that's a message that I try to convey to young people all the time: the idea that if you work hard and commit yourselves to a goal and then pick yourself up when you fall, that there is nothing that you can't achieve.

And as Olympic and Paralympic athletes, you also know that a big part of reaching your full potential is making sure that you're putting the right fuel in your body. You all know that better than anyone in this country: that what you eat absolutely makes a difference in how you perform.

And that's another message that I try to spread to our young people, the importance of eating healthy and staying active. So I want to thank all of you who taped a video for our "Let's Move!" campaign earlier today. Thank you so much for making that happen. And I want to give a special thank you to the USOC for their work to give over 2 million young people opportunities to get active in their communities. We are so grateful for that work, and we're grateful for the example you all set for our young people.

In so many different ways, you all are inspiring folks across the country, not just every 4 years, but every single day. And nowhere have I seen that more clearly than in the story of someone that I met here at the White House 4 years ago under far different circumstances.

Lieutenant Commander Dan Cnossen was seated next to me at a dinner with leaders of our military. And I just got to see Dan, and we were remarking—because we were in the Dip Room, it was the same room we had dinner in together—but just a few months earlier, Dan had been in Afghanistan. He was leading a platoon of Navy SEALs when he stepped on an IED. Dan lost both of his legs in the explosion, but he never lost that fighting spirit.

I will always remember Dan, because just 4 months after that explosion, he finished a half marathon in a wheelchair—4 months after the explosion. On the 1-year anniversary of his injury, he ran a mile on his prosthetics. Over the next few years, Dan stayed on Active Duty while in the Navy, earning medals in swimming and running events at the Warrior Games and completing the New York City Marathon.

And today, 4½ years after his injury, Dan is proud to wear another one of our Nation's uniforms, and that is of Team U.S.A. Yes. [*Applause*] There's Dan.

The President. Dan is in the back there.

The First Lady. Dan is in the back.

The President. Wave again, Dan. There's Dan.

The First Lady. And I also got to meet Dan's sister, who stayed by his side every single minute of his recovery, and she was an important part of that recovery. And she's a terrific woman, a nurse herself. And I'm glad to hear she's doing well.

In Sochi, Dan inspired us all again by competing in the 15K biathlon and the 1-kilometer sitting cross-country sprint. So Dan has come a long way in the 4 years that we met, and I know that his story and the stories of all our Olympians and Paralympians are nowhere near finished.

So keep it up. This is only the beginning. Many of you were here 4 years ago, and you told us you'd be back. And you're back. So I know you're already getting ready for that next 4 years. But in the meantime, we look forward to all that you're going to do in this country and around the world to keep inspiring particularly young people to just live a little more like you all live and to show them that spirit of persistence.

So thank you all, again, for everything that you do. And I can't wait to hear about everything that you will do in the years to come.

And with that, I'm going to turn it over to this guy next to me—[*laughter*]—who happens to be my husband, but more importantly, is the President of the United States, Barack Obama.

The President. Let's, first of all, be clear: It is more important that I'm Michelle's husband

than that I'm President of the United States. [*Laughter*] I just want you to—I don't want anybody to be confused. Many of you young people out there aren't married yet, so I just want you to know—giving you some tips in terms of how to prioritize. [*Laughter*]

Obviously, as Michelle mentioned, our thoughts right now in many ways are with the families at Fort Hood. These are folks who make such extraordinary sacrifices for us each and every day for our freedom. During the course of a decade of war, many of them have been on multiple tours of duty. To see unspeakable, senseless violence happen in a place where they're supposed to feel safe—home base—is tragic. And obviously, this is the second time that the Fort Hood community has been affected this way.

So we join that entire community in honoring those who lost their lives. Every single one of them was an American patriot. We stand with their families and their loved ones as they grieve. We are thinking about those who are wounded. We're there to support them.

And as we learn more about what happened and why, we're going to make sure that we're doing everything in our power to keep our troops safe and to keep our troops strong, and not just on the battlefield, but also when they come home. They've done their duty, and they're an inspiration. They've made us proud. They put on their uniform, and then they take care of us, and we've got to make sure that when they come home, we take care of them.

And that spirit of unity is what brings us here today, because we could not be prouder of Team U.S.A. [*Applause*] Team U.S.A. I hope all of you made yourself at home. We double-checked to make sure that all the bathroom locks were working in case Johnny Quinn—[*laughter*]—tried to bust down one of these antique doors. We didn't want that to happen. [*Laughter*]

I want to recognize the Members of Congress we have here with us, as well as Scott Blackmun and Larry Probst from the USOC, our fantastic delegations that represent the diversity and the values of our country so well. But most of all, we're here just to celebrate all of you, our Olympians and Paralympians who brought home a total of 46 medals for the red, white, and blue.

I understand that freestyle skier Gus Kenworthy also brought home a few stray dogs that he adopted. [*Laughter*] That doesn't count in the medal standings, but it tells you something about the freestyle skiers.

The—over the past couple of months, we saw some dominating performances by Team U.S.A. American women won more medals in the Olympics than women of any other nation. [*Applause*] Way to go, women! Good job. The men swept the podium in slopestyle skiing and Paralympic snowboarding. [*Applause*] There you go. Our women's hockey team brought home the silver. Our men's hockey team played a game for the ages with an epic shootout victory over the Russians.

I would personally like to thank all of our snowboarders and freestyle skiers for making newscasters across America say things like "air to fakie" and the "back-to-back double cork 1260." [*Laughter*] I don't know what that means, really, but I just wanted to say it. [*Laughter*] I'm pretty sure I'm the first President to ever say that. [*Applause*] I'm pretty sure that's true. The back-to-back double cork 1260. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. It feels good.

The President. Does it feel good? [*Laughter*]

In Sochi, these athletes made plenty of history. You had 16-year-old Declan Farmer scoring three goals to help our sled hockey team become the first nation ever to win back-to-back gold medals. Hey! [*Applause*] There he is. There he is. Hey!

Our men's bobsled team became the first Americans in 62 years to medal in both the two-man and the four-man competition. Bobsledders—those are some tough guys, those bobsledders. Don't mess with them. [*Laughter*]

And then, Mikaela Shiffrin became the youngest Olympian ever to win gold in the slalom, at just 18 years old. Where's Mikaela? She's back here somewhere. Wave a little bit.

The First Lady. She's a little—she's down low.

The President. She's down low. See, there she is. I knew she was here. I saw her. [*Laughter*] Afterwards, she said she wants to win five gold in 2018. I do have to say, though, Mikaela, as somebody who was once told that, "you're young, but you should set your sights high," I just got three words of advice: Go for it. The—we are confident you are going to be bringing back some more gold.

Thanks to years of lobbying from Team U.S.A., women's ski jumping was added as an Olympic sport, and they did outstanding. So women can fly just like men. Jessica Jerome said: "We have arrived. We are good at what we do. And we are a lot prettier than the boy jumpers." [*Laughter*] Which I can attest to; I've seen them. [*Laughter*] She wasn't lying.

So from our ski jumpers who fought for equality to the athletes and coaches who have served our country in uniform, like Dan, who we're so proud of, these athletes all send a message that resonates far beyond the Olympic Village. And that's always been the power of the Olympics: In going for the gold and pushing yourselves to be the best, you inspire the rest of us to try to, if not be the best, at least be a little better.

The First Lady. Get off the couch.

The President. Just get off the couch. [*Laughter*] That's what Michelle said.

All of you remind us, just like the Olympic creed states: The most important thing in life is not the triumph, but the fight. And I want to take the example of somebody who couldn't be here today, but her story, I think, is typical of so many of yours. And this is Noelle Pikus-Pace. Noelle was hoping to be here, but she's been on the road a lot, wanted to get back to her husband and her kids, and they may be watching us now.

But almost a decade ago, Noelle was on top of the world after winning the women's skeleton World Cup. She was injured in a freak accident that cost her her chances in 2006. In 2010, she missed the podium by one-tenth of a second. And after all of those Olympics, she retired to spend more time with her family. But then 2 years ago, her husband convinced her to go back on that sled, because raising a family and racing down the track don't have to be mutually exclusive.

So since then, Noelle, her husband, her two young children traveled from competition to competition, living out of suitcases, seeing the world together. And in Sochi, it all paid off, and she took home the silver in the skeleton, jumping over the wall to celebrate with her family on the final run. And here's what said—what Noelle said afterwards: "Life is never going to go as planned. You have to decide, when you're bumped off course, if it's going to hold you back or move you forward."

That's the spirit we celebrate today. That's something Dan understands. That's something that all of you at some stages in your life have understood or will understand. Things aren't always going to go perfect. And Michelle and I always remark, watching our Olympians, that you work hard for 4 years, and then just a little something can happen. And you're just that close, and the courage and the stick-to-it-ness and the confidence and the joy in competition that keeps you moving, that's going to help you throughout life. It helps our country. It's what America is all about. It's why we are so proud to have you all here today.

And 4 years from now, I won't be here to greet you, but some President is going to. And then I suspect that a lot of you may come back even 4 years after that. You guys have done a great job, and what an extraordinary achievement it is for all of you to have represented the United States of America at our Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Congratulations. Good job. Hey!

2014 U.S. Paralympic alpine skier Jon Lujan. Mr. President and Mrs. Obama, on behalf of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Teams, we want to present you with these flags that were signed by all the athletes. And just to say thank you from our coaches, staff, and all the USOC athletes that were competing.

The President. Fantastic.

[*At this point, Mr. Lujan and 2014 U.S. women's hockey team forward Julie Chu presented the flags to the President and First Lady.*]

The President. All right. Good job. Don't tear up the place!

Audience member. We already did!

The President. Did you? [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:55 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to 2014 U.S. Olympic bobsledder Johnny Quinn; Scott Blackmun, chief executive officer, and Lawrence F. Probst III, chairman of the board of directors, U.S. Olympic Committee; and Janson Pace, husband of 2014 U.S. Olympic skeleton sledder Noelle Pikus-Pace, and their children Lacee and Traycen. The First Lady referred to Leslie Cnossen, sister of 2014 U.S. Paralympic cross-country skier and biathlete Dan Cnossen.

Remarks on Signing the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act
April 3, 2014

The President. Well, it is a great honor to be here to sign the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act. And I want to talk about Gabriella, the young girl that this bill is named after.

When Gabriella, a beautiful, fun-loving, smart young lady, was 9 years old, she was diagnosed with a brain tumor about the size of a walnut. And she was tough, and she knew that she had to fight it, and one of the ways that she did was to—it was about the size of a walnut, so she smashed walnuts.

[*At this point, the President addressed Gabriella's brother Jake Miller.*]

And sometimes, I'll bet you might have helped out. [*Laughter*]

And she fought the good fight. And Gabriella didn't make it, and she's in a better place, but her parents Mark and Ellyn, along with her little brother Jake, as well as a coalition of outstanding legislators—Republicans and Democrats, standing behind me—as well as advocates, decided that in her memory we needed to make sure that we get more money into research for the National Institute of Health so that we can know more about brain tumors, how they affect children relative to adults, what more we can do to make sure that the pain that the Miller family went through is not something that has to be repeated.

And so what this legislation is going to do is, it's going to put millions of additional dollars into that research. We're going to need some cooperation from Congress, continuing to work on a bipartisan basis, to actually allocate those dollars in an effective way. I know that NIH is very eager to work on these pediatric cancers, because obviously, nothing is more challenging for a family than to go through something like this, and there's more we can do to prevent it.

So I want to thank all the legislators who are standing behind me here today. I want to thank all the advocates who are here with us today. I especially want to thank the Miller family for being here, because it's a wonderful way to remember a wonderful girl.

Okay, so, Jake, do you think that I should I start signing? I should?

Ellyn Miller. Yes, sir [*Laughter*].

The President. Okay. So what I have to do is, I have to use all of these pens, which means I can only use—for each pen, I can only make, like, half a letter. So it's going to take a little bit of time. Are you okay with that? All right.

[*The President signed the bill.*]

There you go. And there's my signature, and the bill is officially signed. But before we finish up, you get the first pen.

[*The President presented the pen to Jake Miller.*]

Ellyn Miller. Say, "Thank you, sir."

Jake Miller. Thank you.

The President. You're welcome.

All right. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. H.R. 2019, approved April 3, was assigned Public Law No. 113–94.

Message to the Congress on Blocking Property of Certain Persons With Respect to South Sudan
April 3, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in and in relation to South Sudan.

The order does not target the country of South Sudan, but rather is aimed at persons who threaten the peace, stability, or security of South Sudan; commit human rights abuses against persons in South Sudan; or undermine democratic processes or institutions in South Sudan. The order provides authority for blocking the property and interests in property of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have engaged in, directly or indirectly, any of the following in or in relation to South Sudan:
  - actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of South Sudan;
  - actions or policies that threaten transitional agreements or undermine democratic processes or institutions in South Sudan;
  - actions or policies that have the purpose or effect of expanding or extending the conflict in South Sudan or obstructing reconciliation or peace talks or processes;
  - the commission of human rights abuses against persons in South Sudan;
  - the targeting of women, children, or any civilians through the commission of acts of violence (including killing, maiming, torture, or rape or other sexual violence), abduction, forced displacement, or attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or through conduct that would constitute a serious abuse or violation of human rights or a violation of international humanitarian law;
  - the use or recruitment of children by armed groups or armed forces in the context of the conflict in South Sudan;
  - the obstruction of the activities of international peacekeeping, diplomatic, or humanitarian missions in South Sudan, or of the delivery or distribution of, or access to, humanitarian assistance; or
  - attacks against United Nations missions, international security presences, or other peacekeeping operations;
- to be a leader of (i) an entity, including any government, rebel militia, or other group, that has, or whose members have, engaged in any of the activities described above or (ii) an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, any activity described above or any person whose

property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or

- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
April 3, 2014.

NOTE: The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa of Tunisia
April 4, 2014

President Obama. Well, it's a great pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Jomaa here to the Oval Office.

Several years ago, a fruit vendor in Tunisia essentially made a statement to the world about the need for a government that represented ordinary people and an end to corruption and a sense that democracy and rule of law could flourish in the Arab world. And that action triggered a movement that spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

And obviously, what we've seen in the years since is that some countries have had difficulty in this transition. There has been incredible energy and interest among young people about the possibilities of the future, but there's also been great challenges, both economically and politically, in many countries.

The good news is, is that in Tunisia, where this began, we have seen the kind of progress that I think all of us have been hoping for. Although it has been full of challenges, as any democratic process inevitably will confront, what we've seen now is a coming together of various factions within Tunisia, a new Constitution that not only respects the individual rights of men, but also women, that speaks to tolerance and respect for religious minorities. And it creates the bedrock, the foundation for a Tunisian society that can thrive in this new global environment.

Prime Minister Jomaa has a big job ahead of him. He's been tasked with making sure that during this period, as Tunisia is drafting election laws, preparing for new elections for the Presidency and the Parliament, that the economy begins to move forward with reform and that the political changes that are taking place happen smoothly.

Fortunately, by all accounts, the Prime Minister so far has done an outstanding job, and we are very pleased to welcome him and his delegation. The United States has a huge investment in making sure that Tunisia's experiment is successful. And we want nothing more than Tunisians to determine their own destiny, for the economic reforms that take place to allow Tunisia to be not just self-sufficient, but thriving in the world economy.

For this reason, I'm pleased that we're able to provide not only the assistance we've provided over the last 3 years, but additional assistance in the form of loan guarantees. We want to work with Tunisia to help on some of the border security issues that it's confronting with respect to the Libyan border. We have seen excellent cooperation with the Tunisian Government on some of our counterterrorism efforts. And we are confident that with the Prime Min-

ister's guidance that, in fact, Tunisia can meet some its reform goals and lay the foundation for great success in the future.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, we're very pleased to have you here. After our meeting, I'm going to have an opportunity to meet with some Tunisian young people who are here studying in the United States as a consequence of a U.S.-funded scholarship that's being provided. I think the Prime Minister and I both believe that we do our work on behalf of young people, and we want to make sure that we're creating greater and greater opportunities for them. And so to have young people here from Tunisia who are able to not only get skills, but also the values that they can take back to Tunisia to help start businesses and to promote entrepreneurship and to create jobs and opportunity is something that we're very much looking forward to.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. And I know you've had a good visit so far. I'm sure you'll have great success in the months to come, and we want to help. So thank you.

Prime Minister Jomaa. Thank you, Mr. President. Let me first thank you for this kind invitation. I really appreciate that, and it's a great pleasure and an honor for me to be here meeting you. It's an opportunity as well to express the Tunisia's appreciation of all the support you are giving—the United States support, but your personal commitment and engagement to—to support this transition, democratic transition in the march of the Tunisia toward stability and democracy.

So thanks again. As you allowed me to switch in French, I will do it.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Jomaa spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United States Government and to thank President Obama for the warm welcome that has been reserved for us and as we discuss past events, but also as we set the roadmap for the future of my country.

Tunisia and the United States have a long-standing history. In the 18th century, Tunisia was one of the first countries to recognize the United States independence, and conversely, the United States was one of the first countries to recognize Tunisia's independence.

So I want to thank you for allowing us to set this roadmap for the future. First, I would like to say that we are very proud of our new Constitution, of our shared values in democracy and rights. As we set this roadmap, we need to think about economic and social aspects, but as you were saying, we also need to think about teaching and learning, because we are eager to develop our youth and to develop new technologies.

So we have this new hard-won freedom that we have obtained, and the gestation—the birth—of our new Constitution was somewhat difficult, but we have overcome those periods. And now we need to focus on the future, on creating a new future for our youth.

[*Prime Minister Jomaa continued in French, and no further translation was provided. He then spoke in English as follows.*]

——democracy startup. And what I'm saying: Just believe in it. Just take the risk. Invest in it. And we will treat—we take the dividends, part for us. So I prefer to formulate it like this—[*inaudible*]. I believe that it's one of the best startup where we can invest today.

President Obama. Fantastic. Thank you. Thank you so much.

And I would do my statement in French also—[*laughter*]—but my seventh-grade French isn't quite up to it. So—[*laughter*].

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa of Tunisia

April 4, 2014

In their meeting today at the White House, President Obama and Prime Minister Jomaa reaffirmed the strategic partnership between the United States and Tunisia. The two leaders discussed the historic progress made in Tunisia as its political and civil society leaders have worked together to advance Tunisia's democratic transition and secure a more peaceful and prosperous future for Tunisia. The two leaders also emphasized their commitment to advancing our shared interests in a secure, stable, and prosperous Maghreb, Africa, and Middle East and to furthering the strong friendship between the peoples of the United States and Tunisia.

Support for Tunisia's Historic Democratic Transition:

Prime Minister Jomaa briefed President Obama on recent developments in Tunisia's transition to democracy, including the ratification of the new Tunisian Constitution on January 26, 2014, that enshrines equality between women and men. He also noted the establishment of the Independent Elections Commission and the progress that the National Constituent Assembly has made towards finalizing an elections law. Prime Minister Jomaa reiterated the Tunisian government's intention to give all necessary support to ensure the holding of free, fair, and transparent parliamentary and presidential elections before the end of 2014. The President commended the compromises made by all of Tunisia's political parties to secure the country's democratic progress and to set out a pathway towards elections later this year. He lauded Tunisia's efforts to advance its democracy through the adoption of a progressive constitution that protects the rights of all its citizens. The President welcomed Tunisia's efforts to hold elections this year and noted that the United States is prepared to provide additional assistance for the elections and to participate in the delegation of international election observers. Since the revolution began over three years ago, Tunisia has been a model in the region and beyond.

Advancing Economic Cooperation and Development:

The two leaders emphasized that the United States and Tunisia are dedicated to working together to promote economic development and business opportunities in Tunisia. The Prime Minister briefed the President on steps his government is taking to implement economic reforms, keep on track with its International Monetary Fund program, and improve Tunisia's prospects for long-term economic stability. To respond to Tunisia's near-term economic challenges and support the Prime Minister's reform agenda, the President announced the Administration's intent to provide a second loan guarantee for $500 million to facilitate Tunisia's access to international capital markets.

The United States and Tunisia seek to broaden and deepen bilateral trade and business relations. To that end, the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council will next meet on June 16, 2014 in Tunis. The TIFA Council plans to address specific issues aimed at facilitating trade and investment, including in the areas of market access, entrepreneurship, information and communication technology services, and intellectual property. It also expects to explore additional ideas for building a more robust bilateral trade and investment relationship and for liberalizing the exchange of goods and services.

Recognizing the central role of the private sector in creating economic growth, the United States and Tunisia will organize a U.S.-Maghreb Entrepreneurship Conference this fall in Tunis that will bring a high-level U.S. business and government delegation to Tunisia.

Educational and Cultural Cooperation:

In keeping with the importance of people-to-people ties between Tunisia and the United States and of education for advancing long-term development, the United States has provided $10 million through the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship program to support Tunisian students. The United States has requested from Congress an additional $10 million to expand these opportunities to other deserving Tunisians. This effort builds on the long history of educational exchange under the U.S.-Tunisia Fulbright Program and other educational and cultural exchanges. Both leaders committed to strengthening ties and increasing mutual understanding between Tunisian and American youth and expanding the existing university linkage programs.

The Governments of Tunisia and the United States underscore their shared desire to enhance their cooperation by negotiating and concluding a new Science and Technology Agreement. Both sides stressed the economic, educational, and commercial benefits of expanded scientific and technological cooperation.

The President commended the Prime Minister for the support he expressed for Tunisia's participation in the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative and for his dedication to the values it seeks to promote by connecting youth from all different age groups in the Middle East and North Africa with youth in the United States through virtual exchange.

Security and Counterterrorism Cooperation:

The United States and Tunisia have a shared interest in increasing security cooperation to address common threats in Tunisia and across the region. The two leaders committed to advancing increased bilateral contacts between our governments regarding security and defense cooperation, counterterrorism programs, and security assistance. They look forward to continued progress in these areas at the meeting of the Joint Military Commission to be held in Tunis in May 2014.

Broader cooperation on legal matters is a priority for both countries to help advance our security goals and to combat transnational crime. The leaders noted the progress made in negotiations on the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and committed to finalizing the treaty as soon as possible.

Prime Minister Jomaa expressed to President Obama Tunisia's deep and sincere regret for the September 14, 2012 attack against the U.S. Embassy and the American Cooperative School of Tunis. Prime Minister Jomaa stated that his government intends to do everything in its power to resolve remaining issues, including bringing to justice those involved in the attack. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance Tunisia places on the security of all diplomatic facilities in Tunisia and confirmed that Tunisia is continuing to provide all requested security assistance to U.S. Government facilities and personnel.

Conclusion:

The President and the Prime Minister closed the meeting by emphasizing their shared commitment to advancing ties between the United States and Tunisia. They welcomed the progress made during the inaugural session of the U.S.-Tunisia Strategic Dialogue led by Deputy Secretary of State William Burns and Foreign Minister Mongi Hamdi at the Department on April 3. They look forward to a future session of the U.S.-Tunisian Strategic Dialogue to be held in Tunis in 2015. Today's meeting between the two leaders demonstrates the depth and breadth of the partnership and friendship between the United States and Tunisia as well as our shared commitment to supporting Tunisia's historic democratic transition and its economic growth and security.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's Weekly Address
April 5, 2014

Hi, everybody. Today, our economy is growing and our businesses are consistently generating new jobs. But decades-long trends still threaten the middle class. While those at the top are doing better than ever, too many Americans are working harder than ever, but feel like they can't get ahead.

That's why the budget I sent Congress earlier this year is built on the idea of opportunity for all. It will grow the middle class and shrink the deficits we've already cut in half since I took office.

It's an opportunity agenda with four goals. Number one is creating more good jobs that pay good wages. Number two is training more Americans with the skills to fill those jobs. Number three is guaranteeing every child access to a great education. And number four is making work pay, with wages you can live on, savings you can retire on, and health care that's there for you when you need it.

This week, the Republicans in Congress put forward a very different budget. And it does just the opposite: It shrinks opportunity and makes it harder for Americans who work hard to get ahead. The Republican budget begins by handing out massive tax cuts to households making more than $1 million a year. Then, to keep from blowing a hole in the deficit, they'd have to raise taxes on middle class families with kids. Next, their budget forces deep cuts to investments that help our economy create jobs, like education and scientific research.

Now, they won't tell you where these cuts will fall exactly. But compared to my budget, if they cut everything evenly, then within a few years, about 170,000 kids will be cut from early childhood education programs. About 200,000 new mothers and kids will be cut off from programs to help them get healthy food. Schools across the country will lose funding that supports 21,000 special education teachers. And if they want to make smaller cuts to one of these areas, that means larger cuts in others.

Not surprisingly, the Republican budget also tries to repeal the Affordable Care Act, even though that would take away health coverage from the more than 7 million Americans who have done the responsible thing and signed up to buy health insurance. And for good measure, the Republican budget guts the rules we put in place to protect the middle class from another financial crisis like the one we've had to fight so hard to recover from.

Policies that benefit a fortunate few while making it harder for working Americans to succeed, that's not what we need right now. Our economy doesn't grow best from the top down, it grows best from the middle out. That's what my opportunity agenda does, and that's what I'm going to keep on fighting for. Thanks. And have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:15 p.m. on April 3 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on April 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 4, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on April 5.

Statement on the Presidential Election in Afghanistan
April 5, 2014

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the millions of Afghans who enthusiastically participated in today's historic elections, which promise to usher in the first democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history and which represent another important milestone in Afghans taking full responsibility for their country as the United States and our partners draw down our forces.

We commend the Afghan people, security forces, and elections officials on the turnout for today's vote, which is in keeping with the

spirited and positive debate among candidates and their supporters in the runup to the election. These elections are critical to securing Afghanistan's democratic future, as well as continued international support, and we look to the Afghan electoral bodies to carry out their duties in the coming weeks to adjudicate the results, knowing that the most critical voices on the outcome are those of Afghans themselves.

Today we also pay tribute to the many Americans—military and civilian—who have sacrificed so much to support the Afghan people as they take responsibility for their own future. The United States continues to support a sovereign, stable, unified, and democratic Afghanistan, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the new Government chosen by the Afghan people on the basis of mutual respect and mutual accountability.

Statement on the 20th Anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda
April 6, 2014

We join with the people of Rwanda in marking 20 years since the beginning of the genocide that took the lives of so many innocents and which shook the conscience of the world. We honor the memory of the more than 800,000 men, women, and children who were senselessly slaughtered simply because of who they were or what they believed. We stand in awe of their families who have summoned the courage to carry on, and the survivors who have worked through their wounds to rebuild their lives. And we salute the determination of the Rwandans who have made important progress toward healing old wounds, unleashing the economic growth that lifts people from poverty, and contributing to peacekeeping missions around the world to spare others the pain they have known.

At this moment of reflection, we also remember that the Rwandan genocide was neither an accident nor unavoidable. It was a deliberate and systematic effort by human beings to destroy other human beings. The horrific events of those 100 days—when friend turned against friend, and neighbor against neighbor—compel us to resist our worst instincts, just as the courage of those who risked their lives to save others reminds us of our obligations to our fellow man. The genocide we remember today—and the world's failure to respond more quickly—reminds us that we always have a choice. In the face of hatred, we must remember the humanity we share. In the face of cruelty, we must choose compassion. In the face of intolerance and suffering, we must never be indifferent. Embracing this spirit, as nations and as individuals, is how we can honor all those who were lost two decades ago and build a future worthy of their lives.

Remarks at Bladensburg High School in Bladensburg, Maryland
April 7, 2014

Hello, Mustangs! [*Applause*] Fantastic. Well, everybody have a seat. Have a seat. Thank you, Leah, for the great introduction. Give Leah a big round of applause. Yay! [*Applause*] Yes. Meeting young people like Leah just makes me inspired. It's a good way to start the week. And all of the students here who are discovering and exploring new ideas is one of the reasons I love visiting schools like Bladensburg High. And so I just want to congratulate all of you for the great work that you're doing.

I brought a couple of folks here who are helping to facilitate some of the programs here. My new Deputy Secretary of Labor, Chris Lu, is here. Give him a big round of applause. And some of the biggest champions for education in Prince George's County are here, including your Governor, Martin O'Malley; County Executive Rushern Baker; Mayor

Walter James; Superintendent Kevin Maxwell. Your biggest fans in Congress, Donna Edwards and Steny Hoyer. Well, we are proud of all of them, and we're proud of you.

All of you remind me, all these young people here, that young people today are working on cooler stuff than they were when I was in high school. In classrooms all across the country, students just like the students here, they're working hard, they're setting their sights high. And we've got to do everything we can to make sure that all of you have a chance to succeed. And that's why your outstanding principal, Aisha Mahoney, is working so hard at this school. That's why Governor O'Malley has been working so hard to repair old schools and build new ones across the State of Maryland. And that's why I'm here today. Because last year, we launched a national competition to redesign America's high schools for the 21st-century economy. And I'm proud to say that your hard work here has paid off, because one of the winners is Prince George's County. [*Applause*] Good job. That's right, you guys have done great.

Now, let me tell you why this is so important. Many of the young people here, you've grown up in the midst of one of the worst economic crises of our lifetimes. And it's been hard, and it's been painful. There are a lot of families that lost their homes, lost jobs; a lot of families that are still hurting out there. But the work that we've done, the groundwork that we've laid, has created a situation where we're moving in the right direction. Our businesses have created almost 9 million new jobs over the last 4 years. Our high school graduation rate is the highest on record. Dropout rates are going down. Among Latinos, the dropout rate has been cut in half since 2000. More young people are earning college degrees than ever before. We've been bringing troops home from two wars. More than 7 million Americans have now signed up for health coverage through the Affordable Care Act.

So we've been making progress, but we've got more work to do to make sure that every one of these young people, that everybody who is willing to work hard, has the chance to get ahead. We've got to make sure that our economy works for everybody, not just a few. We've got to make sure opportunity exists for all people. No matter who you are, no matter where you started out, you've got to have confidence that if you work hard and take responsibility, you can make it.

And that's the chance that this country gave me. It's the chance that this country gave Michelle. And that's why we're working so hard for what we call an opportunity agenda, one that gives everybody a shot. And there are four simple goals: We want to create new jobs; we want to make sure that people have the skills to fill those jobs; we want to make sure every young person has a world-class education; and we want to make sure that we reward hard work with things like health care you can count on and wages you can live on.

And Maryland and Governor O'Malley have been working alongside us on these issues, and I want to give a special shout-out to the Maryland Legislature because, because of Governor O'Malley's leadership, you are helping to make sure that we are raising more people's wages with your push to raise your minimum wage right here in Maryland. And we're very proud to see that happen. And I hope Governor O'Malley is going to sign it into law soon. Give Maryland a raise. [*Applause*] That's good work.

But the main focus here is guaranteeing every young person has access to a world-class education—every single student. Now, that starts before high school. We've got to start at the youngest ages by making sure we've got high-quality preschool and other early learning programs for every young child in America. It makes a difference.

We've got to make sure that every student has access to the world's information and the world's best technology. And that's why we're moving forward with an initiative we call ConnectED, to finally connect 99 percent of America's students to high-speed Internet in the next few years. It means that we've got to rein in college costs, because I want to make sure that Leah, when she goes to school, she's not burdened with too much debt. And we've got to make it easier to repay student loans, be-

cause none of the young people here should be denied a higher education just because your family has trouble affording it. And a world-class education means preparing every young person with the skills they need for college, for a career, and for a lifetime of citizenship.

So what we did was, we launched a new competition, backed by America's Departments of Education and Labor, to start redesigning some of our high schools. We call it Youth CareerConnect. And we're offering a hundred million dollars in new grants to help schools and local partners develop and test new curricula and models for success. We want to invest in your future.

You guys are all coming up in an age where you're not going to be able to compete with people across town for good jobs, you're going to be competing with the rest of the world. Every—young people in India and China, they're all interested in trying to figure out how they get a foothold in this world economy. That's who you're competing against. Now, I'm confident you can match or exceed anything they do, but we don't do it by just resting on what we've done before. We've got to outwork and outinnovate and outhustle everybody else. We've got to think about new ways of doing things.

And part of our concern has been, our high schools, a lot of them were designed with curriculums based on the 1940s and fifties and sixties and haven't been updated. So the idea behind this competition is how do we start making high school, in particular, more interesting, more exciting, more relevant to young people.

Last year, for example, I visited a school called P–TECH—this is in Brooklyn—a high school that partnered with IBM and the City University of New York to offer its students not only a high school diploma, but also an associate's degree in computer systems or electromechanical engineering. IBM said that P–TECH graduates would be the first in line for jobs.

Then I visited a high school in Nashville that offers academies where students focus on a specific subject area, but they're also getting hands-on experience running their own credit union, working in their own TV studios, learning 3–D printing, tinkering with their own airplane—which was pretty cool. [*Laughter*] I never got to do that. I did get my own airplane later in life. [*Laughter*] But—although I've got to give it back. [*Laughter*] I don't get to keep it.

But this is stuff I didn't get to do when I was in high school, and I wish I had. But it's stuff you have to know how to do today, in today's economy. Things are moving faster; they're more sophisticated.

So we challenged America's high schools to look at what's happening in a place like P–TECH, look at what's happening in cities like Nashville, and then say, what can you do to make sure your students learn the skills that businesses are looking for in high-demand fields? And we asked high schools to develop partnerships with colleges and employers and create classes that focus on real-life applications for the fields of the future, fields like science and technology and engineering and math. And part of the reason we have to do this now is because other countries, they've got a little bit of a lead on us on some of these areas.

A country like Germany right now focuses on graduating their high school students with a technical degree equivalent that gives them a head start. So we're asking schools to look into what places like Germany are doing.

Now, not every school that enters into this competition for the hundred million dollars is going to win, because we don't have enough money for everybody, and we want to force schools to think hard and redesign them, and we want to reward the schools that are being most innovative and are actually proving some of the concepts that they're trying out. But the great thing is that through this competition, schools across the country that entered have changed the way they prepare their students and have already made enormous improvements, even when—before they get the grant. And ultimately, we had to choose the top Youth CareerConnect initiatives. Today I'm proud to say that schools across America are putting up some pretty impressive proposals.

The winners across the board are doing the kinds of stuff that will allow other schools to

start duplicating what they're doing. The winners in Indianapolis are expanding their career prep programs to encourage more young women and kids from diverse backgrounds to join our science and technology workforce. New York City likes that Brooklyn high school model, P–TECH, so much that they're using their grant to fund two more just like it so that students can gain two degrees at once and get the edge they need in today's high-tech, high-speed economy. And as I mentioned earlier, one of our 24 winners is a three-school team including your high school. Mustangs, you guys are part of the team that won! [*Applause*] That's good.

Now, in part, the reason you won is because you guys were ahead of the curve. You were already winning. For a couple years now, your career academies have been integrating classroom learning with ready-to-work skills, and you're preparing students to move directly into the in-demand jobs of the future: jobs in IT and biosciences and hospitality. And now you're stepping it up. You're taking it to another level. So in the classroom I just visited, you had 10th graders—although there was also a freshman—who are studying epidemiology, the study of disease patterns and outbreaks. And they're getting potentially college-level credit for it, which is good because there—they may be the young people who discover a cure for some disease down the line that we don't even know about yet.

I know our brilliant scientists at the National Institute for Health and the Center for Disease Control, they'd be proud of you. They like looking at bacteria. [*Laughter*] And I got a little worried when I went into the classroom. Everybody was wearing goggles and vests, and I didn't have my goggles. So—[*laughter*]. But they assured me it was safe. But some of you Mustangs are pushing yourselves to get industry-recognized certifications in nursing, while other students on this winning team are studying cutting-edge technology and getting hands-on internship experience at local businesses. And we know these are skills that will be in demand. Companies will come looking to hire you because of the experiences you've gotten here.

If you're focused, if you're working hard, you now have a platform so that by the time you get out of high school you're already ahead of the game; you're already in a position where you've got some skills that make you employable. And then you can just take it further, whether it's a 2-year college or a 4-year college or graduate school. Or there are a couple of young ladies in there who said they want to be neurosurgeons and psychiatrists. So you can build on these careers, but the point is, you have a baseline where you know if you're focused here at this school, doing your work, you're going to be able to find a job.

And the grants that you've won in this Youth CareerConnect competition mean that the programs you've started are going to expand and you're going to get more college and career counseling to help get you a jump on your post–high school plans. So a little over 4 years from now, Bladensburg and your partner schools will graduate hundreds more students with the knowledge and skills that you'll need to succeed.

And that's what we want for all the young people here. We want an education that engages you; we want an education that equips you with the rigorous and relevant skills for college and for a career.

And I'm confident—meeting these young people, they were incredible. And a couple of them giggled a little bit when I walked in, but after they kind of settled down—[*laughter*]—they were—they knew their stuff, and they were enjoying it. And that's part of the message I've got for all the young people here today, is, your potential for success is so high as long as you stay focused. As long as you're clear about your goals, you're going to succeed.

And my message to the older people here like me is, we've got a collective responsibility to make sure that you're getting those opportunities. And there are resources out there that we've got to pull into the school setting. Businesses, foundations around the country, they want to fund more CareerConnect programs,

because it's in their interest. They want good employees. They're looking for folks with skills.

When you can say, "Hey, the math that I'm doing here could change the way the business operates," or, "I see how this biology experiment could help develop a drug that cures a disease," that's a door opening in your imagination. It's also good for our economy. It's good for our businesses. That's a new career path you're thinking about that allows you to pursue higher education in that field or the very training you need to get a good job or create a new business that changes the world. That's good for our economy, it's good for business; it's good for you, it's good for America.

As a country, we've got to do everything we can to make sure that every single young person here can have that "aha" moment. That light bulb goes off, and suddenly, you're not just studying because your parents tell you to or your teacher tells you to, you're studying because you know you've got something to offer.

And I want to make sure every student in America has a chance to get that moment, that realization that your education can not just unlock your future and take you places you never imagined, but you're also going to be leading this country. That's the chance that this country gave to me and Michelle. And that's the chance I want for every single one of you. From preschool for every 4-year-old in America to higher education for everybody who wants to go, every young person deserves a fair shot. And I'm going to keep on doing everything I can to make sure you get that shot and to keep America a place where you can make it if you try.

I'm proud of your principal. I'm proud of your superintendent. I'm proud of everybody who got involved in making sure that you guys were already doing the right thing before you won this new grant. And I know it's going to be well spent. Most of all, I'm proud of the students.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Go Mustangs! All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Leah Woody, student, Bladensburg High School; Kevin M. Maxwell, superintendent, Prince George's County Public Schools; and Rushern L. Baker III, county executive, Prince George's County, MD.

Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Maria Contreras-Sweet as Administrator of the Small Business Administration
April 7, 2014

All right, everybody, please have a seat.

I just wanted to stop by and congratulate Maria on officially being sworn in as the head of the SBA.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here today, as well as the terrific staff at the SBA for helping America's small businesses succeed, and who have been holding down the fort until we got this confirmation through.

I nominated Maria because she knows first hand the challenges that small businesses go through, and she has a proven track record of helping them succeed. She was California's secretary of business, transportation, and housing, and in that role she was the driving force behind major public investments in job-creating industries. As the founder of the ProAmérica Bank, she supported Latino entrepreneurs throughout Los Angeles.

So Maria understands that small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy. They represent the promise that if you work hard in this country, you can succeed, and you can help your children do even better.

And that's why this administration has been so focused on helping small businesses succeed from day one. We cut taxes 18 times for small businesses in my first term. We've helped more than 200,000 small businesses get loans supported by the SBA. Today, our economy is growing and our businesses have created

almost 9 million new jobs, and a lot of that has to do with the fact that there are small businesses out there who are making things happen every single day.

But we can always do more. And that's why having such a hard charger as Maria, who knows both the entrepreneurial side as well as public service, is so important. When I announced her nomination back in January, I was absolutely confident that she was going to do a terrific job. And I am no less confident today.

I understand, she already had meetings this morning. She didn't really wait for the ceremony—[*laughter*]—to start meeting with some of our veterans and women-owned businesses and Latino- and African American-owned businesses. And she's going to be out there, I know, listening to small businesses, working with our other agencies that are in charge of helping businesses grow. And I'm confident that by the end of her tenure she's really going to have made her mark and made a difference. And of course, she also has a really beautiful family, which is good too.

So with that, Biden is in charge of the next stage of this thing. [*Laughter*] And he always does a great job. And it's not that many lines—[*laughter*]—so hopefully, we'll get them right. We had a few problems my first time out, but second time went smoothly. So—[*laughter*]. And Joe has done this a lot. [*Laughter*]

So congratulations again, Maria. Thank you.

[*At this point, the President left the stage. Vice President Joe Biden delivered brief remarks and then administered the oath of office. Administrator Contreras-Sweet then delivered brief remarks.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:35 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden and Administrator Contreras-Sweet.

Statement on the Maryland Legislature's Passage of Legislation To Raise the Minimum Wage

April 7, 2014

The Maryland Legislature did the right thing for its workers today by increasing the State minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. Maryland's important action is a reminder that many States, cities and counties, as well as a majority of the American people, are way ahead of Washington on this crucial issue. I applaud Governor O'Malley and the State legislature for leading by example and giving more Maryland workers the raise they deserve. But there's only one group who can get the job done for the entire country—that's Congress. They should follow Maryland's lead and lift wages for 28 million Americans by passing legislation to increase the Federal minimum wage to $10.10, helping to ensure that no American who works full time has to raise a family in poverty and that every American who works hard has the opportunity to succeed.

Statement on Senate Action on Emergency Unemployment Insurance Legislation

April 7, 2014

Today the Senate acted in a bipartisan way to reinstate emergency unemployment insurance for 2.3 million Americans who depend on it as they search for work. As I've said time and again, Washington needs to put politics aside and help these hard-working, responsible Americans make ends meet and support their families as they look for a job. Each week Con-

gress fails to act on this crucial issue, roughly 70,000 long-term unemployed Americans lose their vital economic lifeline. I urge House Republicans to stop blocking a bipartisan compromise that would stem this tide, take up the bill without delay, and send it to my desk. Let's remove this needless drag on our economy and focus on expanding opportunity for all Americans.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Somalia
April 7, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13536 of April 12, 2010, with respect to Somalia is to continue in effect beyond April 12, 2014.

On January 17, 2013, the United States Government announced its recognition of the Government of Somalia. The United States had not recognized a government in Somalia for the previous 22 years. Although the U.S. recognition underscores a strong commitment to Somalia's stabilization, it does not remove the importance of U.S. sanctions, especially against persons undermining the stability of Somalia. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Somalia and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
April 7, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Signing an Executive Order on Non-Retaliation for Disclosure of Compensation Information and a Memorandum on Advancing Pay Equality Through Compensation Data Collection
April 8, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. All right. Well, thanks to my friend, Lilly Ledbetter, not only for that introduction, but for fighting for a simple principle: equal pay for equal work. It's not that complicated. And, Lilly, I assure you, you remain the face of fair pay. [*Laughter*] People don't want my mug on there. [*Laughter*] They want your face.

As Lilly mentioned, she did not set out to be a trailblazer. She was just somebody who was waking up every day, going to work, doing her job the best that she could. And then one day, she finds out, after years, that she earned less than her male colleagues for doing the same job. I want to make that point again. [*Laughter*] Doing the same job. This—sometimes, when you—when we discuss this issue of fair pay, equal pay for equal work, and the pay gap between men and women, you'll hear all sorts of excuses about: Now, well, they're childbearing, and they're choosing to do this, and they're this, and they're that and the other. She was doing the same job, probably doing it better. [*Laughter*] Same job. Working just as hard, probably putting in more hours. But she was getting systematically paid less.

And so she set out to make sure this country lived up to its founding, the idea that all of us are created equal. And when the courts didn't answer her call, Congress did.

The first time Lilly and I stood together in this room was my 10th day in office, and that's when we signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. First bill I signed into law. And some of the leaders who helped make that happen are here today, including Leader Pelosi and Senator Mikulski and Congresswoman DeLauro. I want to thank all the Members of Congress and all the State legislators who are here and all the advocates who are here, because you all contributed to that effort. And I want to give a special thanks to the members of the National Equity Pay—Equal Pay Task Force, who have done outstanding work to make workplaces across America more fair.

Now, we're here because today is Equal Pay Day. [*Applause*] Equal Pay Day. And it's nice to have a day, but it's even better to have equal pay. And our job is not finished yet. Equal Pay Day means that a woman has to work about this far into 2014 to earn what a man earned in 2013. Think about that. A woman has got to work about 3 more months in order to get what a man got, because she's paid less. That's not fair. That's like adding an extra 6 miles to a marathon. [*Laughter*] It's not right.

Audience member. Ain't right.

The President. Ain't right. [*Laughter*] It's not right, and it ain't right. [*Laughter*]

America should be a level playing field, a fair race for everybody, a place where anybody who's willing to work hard has a chance to get ahead. And restoring that opportunity for every American—men and women—has to be a driving focus for our country.

Now, the good news is, today our economy is growing. Businesses have created almost 9 million new jobs over the past 4 years. More than 7 million Americans have signed up for health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act. [*Applause*] That's a good thing too.

And I know it's Equal Pay Day and not "Obamacare day"—[*laughter*]—but I do want to point out that the Affordable Care Act guarantees free preventive care, like mammograms and contraceptive care, for tens of millions of women and ends the days when you could be charged more just for being a woman when it comes to your health insurance. And that's true for everybody. That's just one more place where things were not fair.

We'll talk about drycleaners next, right—[*laughter*]—because I know that—I don't know why it costs more for Michelle's blouse than my shirt. [*Laughter*]

But we've got to make sure that America works for everybody. Anybody who is willing to work hard, they should be able to get ahead. And we've got to build an economy that works for everybody, not just those at the top. Restoring opportunity for all has to be our priority. That's what America is about. It doesn't matter where you started off, what you look like; you work hard, you take responsibility, you make the effort, you should be able to get ahead.

And we've got to fight for an opportunity agenda, which means more good jobs that pay good wages and training Americans to make sure that they can fill those jobs and guaranteeing every child a world-class education and making sure the economy rewards hard work for every single American.

And part of that is fighting for fair pay for women, because when women succeed, America succeeds. When women succeed, America succeeds. [*Applause*] It's true. I believe that. It's true. It's true. [*Applause*] It's true.

Now, here's the challenge: Today, the average full-time working woman earns just 77 cents for every dollar a man earns; for African American women, Latinas, it's even less. And in 2014, that's an embarrassment. It is wrong. And this is not just an issue of fairness, it's also a family issue and an economic issue, because women make up about half of our workforce and they're increasingly the breadwinners for a whole lot of families out there. So when they make less money, it means less money for gas, less money for groceries, less money for childcare, less money for college tuition, less money is going into retirement savings.

And it's all bad for business, because our economy depends on customers out there, and when customers have less money, when hard-

working women don't have the resources, that's a problem. When businesses lose terrific women talent because they're fed up with unfair policies, that's bad for business. They lose out on the contributions that those women could be making. When any of our citizens can't fulfill their potential for reasons that have nothing to do with their talent or their character or their work ethic, we're not living up to our founding values. We don't have second-class citizens in this country and certainly not in the workplace.

So tomorrow the Senate has the chance to start making this right by passing a bill that Lilly already alluded to: the Paycheck Fairness Act. They've got a chance to do the right thing. And it would put sensible rules into place, like making sure employees who discuss their salaries don't face retaliation by their employers.

And it's—here's why this is important. There are women here today who worked in offices where it was against the rules for employees to discuss salaries with one another. And because of that, they didn't know they were being paid less than men—just like Lilly didn't know—for doing the exact same work. For some, it was years before they found out. And even then, it only happened because a manager accidentally let it slip or, as in Lilly's case, a sympathetic coworker quietly passed a note. She only found out she earned less than her male colleagues for doing the same work because somebody left an anonymous note.

We can't leave that to chance. And over the course of Lilly's career, she lost more than $200,000 in salary, even more in pension and Social Security benefits—both of which are pegged to salary—simply because she was a woman.

And Lilly and some of the other women here decided it was wrong, set out to fix it. They went to their bosses; they asked for a raise. That didn't work. They turned to the law; they filed suit. And for some, for years after waiting and persisting, they finally got some justice.

Well, tomorrow the Senate could pay tribute to their courage by voting yes for paycheck fairness. This should not be a hard proposition. This should not be that complicated.

And so far, Republicans in Congress have been gumming up the works. They've been blocking progress on this issue and, of course, other issues that would help with the economic recovery and help us grow faster. But we don't have to accept that. America, you don't have to sit still. You can make sure that you're putting some pressure on Members of Congress about this issue. And I don't care whether you're a Democrat or a Republican. If you're a voter—if you've got a daughter, you've got a sister, you've got a mom—I know you got a mom—[*laughter*]—this is something you should care about.

And I'm not going to stand still either. So in this year of action I've used my executive authority whenever I could to create opportunity for more Americans. And today I'm going to take action—executive action—to make it easier for working women to earn fair pay. So first, I'm going to sign an Executive order to create more pay transparency by prohibiting Federal contractors from retaliating against employees who discuss their pay with each other.

Audience member. Excellent!

The President. Right? Pay secrecy fosters discrimination, and we should not tolerate it, not in Federal contracting or anywhere else.

Second, I'm signing a Presidential memorandum directing the Department of Labor and our outstanding Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, to require Federal contractors to provide data about their employee compensation so pay discrimination can be spotted more easily.

Now, I want to be clear: There are great employers out there who do the right thing. And there are plenty of employers out there who are absolutely certain that there's no pay discrimination happening in their offices. But then sometimes, when the data is laid out, it paints a different picture. Many times, they then do everything they can to fix the problem, and so we want to encourage them to fix these problems if they exist by making sure that the data is out there.

So everybody who cares about this should pay attention to how the Senate votes tomorrow on this payness—Paycheck Fairness Act, because the majority of Senators support this bill, but 2 years ago, a minority of Senate Republicans blocked it from getting a vote. Even worse, some commentators are out there saying that the pay gap doesn't even exist. They say it's a myth. But it's not a myth, it's math. [*Laughter*] You can look at the paychecks. You can look at the stubs.

I mean, Lilly Ledbetter didn't just make this up. [*Laughter*] The court, when it looked at the documents, said, yes, yes, you've been getting paid less for doing the same job. It's just the court then said, you know, it's been—as Lilly said—it's been happening so long, you can't do anything about it anymore, which made no sense, and that's why we had to sign another bill. It's basic math that adds up to real money. It makes a real difference for a lot of Americans who are working hard to support their families.

And of course, the fact that we've got some resistance from some folks on this issue up on Capitol Hill just fits with this larger problem, this vision that the congressional Republicans seem to be continually embracing, this notion that, you know what, you're just on your own, no matter how unfair things are. You see it in their budget. The budget the Republicans in Congress just put forward last week, it's like a bad rerun. It would give massive tax cuts to households making more than a million dollars a year, force deep cuts to things that actually help working families, like early education and college grants and job training.

And of course, it includes that novel idea of repealing the Affordable Care Act. [*Laughter*] Fiftieth time they've tried that, which would mean the more than 7 million Americans who've done the responsible thing and signed up to buy health insurance, they'd lose their health insurance, and the 3 million young adults who've stayed on their parent's plan, they'd no longer have that available; take us back to the days when insurers could charge women more just for being a woman.

On minimum wage, three out of four Americans support raising the minimum wage. Usually, when three out of four Americans support something, Members of Congress are right there. [*Laughter*] And yet here, Republicans in Congress are dead set against it, blocking a pay raise for tens of millions of Americans, a majority of them women. This isn't just about treating women fairly, this is about Republicans seemingly opposing any efforts to even the playing field for working families.

And I was up in Michigan last week, and I just asked, I don't understand the—fully the theory behind this. I don't know why you would resist the idea that women should be paid the same as men and then deny that that's not always happening out there. If Republicans in Congress want to prove me wrong, if they want to show that they, in fact, do care about women being paid the same as men, then show me. They can start tomorrow. They can join us in this, the 21st century, and vote yes on the Paycheck Fairness Act. [*Applause*] Vote yes.

And if anybody is watching or listening, if you care about this issue, then let your Senators know where you stand, because America deserves equal pay for equal work.

This is not something we're going to achieve in a day. There's going to be a lot of stuff that we've got to do to close the pay gap. We've got to make it possible for more women to enter high-paying fields that up until now have been dominated by men, like engineering and computer science. Women hold less than 6 percent of our country's commercial patents. That's not good enough. We need more parents and high school teachers and college professors encouraging girls and women to study math and science. We need more businesses to make gender diversity a priority when they hire and when they promote. Fewer than 5 percent of Fortune 500 companies have women at the helm.

I think we'd all agree that we need more women in Congress. [*Applause*] You know? Fewer than 20 percent of congressional seats are held by women. Clearly, Congress would get more done if the ratio was—[*laughter*]—

evened out a little bit. So we've got to work on that.

And we've all got to do more to make our workplaces more welcoming to women. Because the numbers show that even when men and women are in the same profession and have the same education, there's still a wage gap, and it widens over time. So we're going to keep making the case for why these policies are the right ones for working families and businesses. And this is all going to lead up to this first-ever White House Summit on Working Families on June 23.

So ultimately, equal pay is not just an economic issue for millions of Americans and their families. It's also about whether we're willing to build an economy that works for everybody and whether we're going to do our part to make sure that our daughters have the same chances to pursue their dreams as our sons and whether or not we're willing to restore to the heart of this country that basic idea: You can make it, no matter who you are, if you try.

And that's personal for me. I've said this before: I've got two daughters, and I expect them to be treated just like anybody's sons. And I think about my single mom working hard, going to school, trying to raise two kids all at the same time. And I think about my grandmother trying to work her way up through her career and then hitting the glass ceiling. And I've seen how hard they've worked, and I've seen how they've sucked it up. And they put up with stuff, and they don't say anything, and they just take care of their family, and they take care of themselves, and they don't complain a lot. But at a certain point, we have the power to do something about it for the next generation. And this is a good place to start.

So for everybody out there who's listening, ask your Senator where you stand on paycheck fairness. If they tell you that there's not a pay gap out there, you tell them to look at the data, because there is. It's time to get this done. And I'm going to do my small part right now by signing these Executive orders and Presidential memoranda.

All right. Scoot on over here guys. Come on, let's scoot in here. Scoot in here. All right.

[*At this point, the President signed the Executive order.*]

The President. There you go. That's done right there.

All right, and then I've got another one. This is for you, Tom. [*Laughter*]

[*The President signed the memorandum.*]

The President. There you go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lilly Ledbetter, former employee, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. plant in Gadsden, AL; and his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. The Executive order and memorandum are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Victims of the Shooting at Fort Hood, Texas

April 9, 2014

In our lives—in our joys and in our sorrows—we've learned that there is "a time for every matter under heaven." We laugh, and we weep. We celebrate, and we mourn. We serve in war, and we pray for peace. But Scripture also teaches that, alongside the temporal, one thing is eternal: "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

Deputy Secretary Fox; General Dempsey; Secretary McHugh; Generals Odierno and Milley; and most of all, the families of the soldiers who have been taken from us; the wounded, those who have returned to duty and those still recovering; and the entire community of Fort Hood, this "Great Place": It is love, tested by tragedy, that brings us together again.

It was love for country that inspired these three Americans to put on the uniform and join the greatest Army that the world has ever known. Sergeant First Class Daniel Ferguson. Staff Sergeant Carlos Lazaney-Rodriguez. Sergeant Timothy Owens.

And Danny and Carlos joined two decades ago, in a time of peace, and stayed as the Nation went to war. Timothy joined after 9/11, knowing he could be sent into harm's way. Between them, they deployed nine times. Each served in Iraq. Danny came home from Afghanistan just last year. They lived those shining values—loyalty, duty, honor—that keep us strong and free.

It was love for the Army that made them the soldiers they were. For Danny, said his fiancée, being in the Army "was his life." Carlos, said a friend, was "the epitome of what you would want a leader to be in the Army." Timothy helped counsel his fellow soldiers. Said a friend, "He was always the person you could go to talk to."

And it was love for their comrades, for all of you, that defined their last moments. As we've heard, when the gunman tried to push his way into that room, Danny held the door shut, saving the lives of others while sacrificing his own. And it's said that Timothy—the counselor, even then—gave his life walking toward the gunman, trying to calm him down.

For you, their families, no words are equal to your loss. We are here on behalf of the American people to honor your loved ones and to offer whatever comfort we can. But know this: We also draw strength from you. For even in your grief, even as your heart breaks, we see in you that eternal truth: "Love never ends."

To the parents of these men: As a father, I cannot begin to fathom your anguish. But I know that you poured your love and your hopes into your sons. I know that the men and soldiers they became—their sense of service and their patriotism—so much of that came from you. You gave your sons to America, and just as you will honor them always, so too will the Nation that they served.

To the loves of their lives—Timothy's wife Billy and Danny's fiancée Kristen—these soldiers cherished the Army, but their hearts belonged to you. And that's a bond that no earthly power can ever break. They have slipped from your embrace, but know that you will never be alone, because this Army and this Nation stands with you for all the days to come.

To their children: We live in a dangerous world, and your fathers served to keep you safe and us safe. They knew you have so much to give to our country, that you'd make them proud. Timothy's daughter Lori already has. Last Wednesday night, she posted this message online: "I just want everyone to think for a moment." Love your family, she said, "because you never know when [they're] gonna be taken from you. I love you, daddy."

And to the men and women of Fort Hood: As has already been mentioned, part of what makes this so painful is that we have been here before. This tragedy tears at wounds still raw from 5 years ago. Once more, soldiers who survived foreign war zones were struck down here at home, where they're supposed to be safe. We still do not yet know exactly why, but we do know this: We must honor their lives, not "in word or talk, but in deed and in truth."

We must honor these men with a renewed commitment to keep our troops safe, not just in battle, but on the homefront as well. In our open society, and at vast bases like this, we can never eliminate every risk. But as a nation, we can do more to help counsel those with mental health issues, to keep firearms out of the hands of those who are having such deep difficulties. As a military, we must continue to do everything in our power to secure our facilities and spare others this pain.

We must honor these men by doing more to care for our fellow Americans living with mental illness, civilian and military. Today, four American soldiers are gone. Four Army families are devastated. As Commander in Chief, I'm determined that we will continue to step up our efforts to reach our troops and veterans who are hurting, to deliver to them the care that they need, and to make sure we never stigmatize those who have the courage to seek help.

And finally, we must honor these men by recognizing that they were members of a generation that has borne the burden of our security in more than a decade of war. Now our troops are coming home, and by the end of this year, our war in Afghanistan will finally be over.

In an era when fewer Americans know someone in uniform, every American must see these men and these women—our 9/11 generation—as the extraordinary citizens that they are. They love their families. They excel at their jobs. They serve their communities. They are leaders. And when we truly welcome our veterans home, when we show them that we need them—not just to fight in other countries, but to build up our own—then our schools and our businesses, our communities and our Nation, will be more successful, and America will be stronger and more united for decades to come.

Sergeant First Class Daniel Ferguson. Staff Sergeant Carlos Lazaney-Rodriguez. Sergeant Timothy Owens. Like the 576 Fort Hood soldiers who have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan, they were taken from us much too soon. Like the 13 Americans we lost 5 years ago, their passing shakes our soul. And in moments such as this, we summon once more what we've learned in these hard years of war. We reach within our wounded hearts. We lean on each other. We hold each other up. We carry on. And with God's amazing grace, we somehow bear what seems unbearable.

"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." May God watch over these American soldiers, may He keep strong their families whose love endures, and may God continue to bless the United States of America with patriots such as these.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. in front of the III Corps Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Mark A. Milley, III Corps commander, Fort Hood; Spc. Ivan A. Gomez, USA, suspected gunman in the April 2 shooting at Fort Hood; Mike Myers, friend, Billy Lynn Humphrey Owens, wife, and Loredana Owens, daughter, of Sgt. Timothy W. Owens, USA, who was killed in the April 2 shooting; and Kristen Haley, fiancée of shooting victim Sfc. Daniel M. Ferguson, USA.

Statement on Senate Action To Block Wage Equality Legislation
April 9, 2014

Today Senate Republicans overwhelmingly blocked the Paycheck Fairness Act, preventing it from even receiving an honest debate, let alone a simple yes-or-no vote. The Paycheck Fairness Act is commonsense legislation that would strengthen the 1963 Equal Pay Act and reinforce our country's commitment to the principle of equal pay for equal work. Yesterday I took two actions that will make it easier for working women to earn fair pay, and my administration will continue to do everything we can to make sure that every hard-working American earns the respect and wages that they deserve on the job. But Republicans in Congress continue to oppose serious efforts to create jobs, grow the economy and level the playing field for working families. That's wrong, and it's harmful for our national efforts to rebuild an economy that gives every American who works hard a fair shot to get ahead.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in Houston, Texas
April 9, 2014

The President. Thank you. Everybody, sit down. Have a seat, have a seat. Have a seat. Thank you. Well, first of all, I just want to thank John Eddie and Sheridan for building

this house just for our fundraiser here. [*Laughter*] I think it turned out just fine. I don't know what your next project is. [*Laughter*] But it is gorgeous, and we are so grateful to you for everything you've done for this community, everything you've done for the country, and all the help that you've provided to Democrats all across the country. It really means a lot. So thank you very much. Appreciate you all.

We've got some other luminaries here that I just want to make sure I recognize. First of all, your outstanding mayor, Annise Parker, is here, with her beautiful daughter. Good to see you. Somebody who is going to be Speaker of the House once again, has already gone down in history as one of the best Speakers we've ever had, Nancy Pelosi is in the house. Of course, you cannot be a good Speaker unless you've got great Members in your caucus, and we've got a couple of outstanding ones from the Houston area: Sheila Jackson Lee and Representative Al Green. And two outstanding former leaders here in Texas who continue to provide so much outstanding service to the community. First of all, former Mayor Bill White is in the house. He just wrote a book, by the way. Everybody go out and buy it. [*Laughter*] You've always got to—if somebody is an author, you've always got to plug the guy's book. [*Laughter*] It was reviewed in the New York Times. It's a serious book. And also former Governor Mark White. Where did Mark go? There he is right there.

And of course, all of you are here today, so I want to thank you for that. And whoever was in charge of the weather in Houston—usually I come down to Houston, and it's not quite this comfortable. But it's beautiful. And thanks to Eden for coming too, because she's laughing at all my jokes. [*Laughter*]

Let me say, first of all, I just came down from Fort Hood, and we were commemorating and celebrating the lives of three incredible patriots who were shot and killed during the event that happened last week there, and met with the families and had a chance to address the entire community. And I think it's useful just to remember as we wind down this war in Afghanistan how heavy a burden our men and women in uniform and their families have carried over these last 10-plus years of war and how many scars—seen and unseen—remain and how important it is for us to support these incredible patriots and incredible veterans. I know that that's something that folks focus on here in Houston, but I wanted to make sure that I made mention of that.

As a consequence, I was out of Washington, which usually is okay. It's good getting out of Washington, gives you a little perspective. While I was gone, the Republicans in the Senate chose to block a bill that seemed like common sense, I think, to most of us, which would provide the ability for us to meaningfully enforce the simple concept of equal pay for equal work; the notion that your mom, your sister, your daughters, your spouse should not be discriminated against at the workplace, and if they're doing a good job doing something, that they should get paid the same as somebody's son, husband, father.

We would—you would think that that, at this point, would not be a controversial proposition. And yet the Republicans in the Senate uniformly decided to say no. Now, we had done an Executive order yesterday facilitating Federal contractors to provide basic information—[*applause*]—to make sure that if somebody shares their salary with a fellow employee, that they couldn't be retaliated against; that some data is provided—in aggregate, not in detailed ways—that make sure that people know whether or not they're treating women the way they should on the job. But obviously, the action I took through this Executive order was restricted to Federal contractors; it didn't reach every employer.

Now, apparently, a lot of these Republicans during the debate said they just think that this idea there's a gender pay gap is a fantasy, it's not real, there are all these other reasons why this happens. And in fact, I think there was a candidate for the Senate, a Republican in Michigan, who voiced the opinion that women make other choices; you know, they—and I think that's certainly true; every individual makes other choices. Very rarely do you meet

people who make the choice to be paid less for doing the same job. [*Laughter*]

But I use this as just one example of the scores of issues that are critical to advancing this country's future in which not only is the other side blocking progress, but aren't even offering a persuasive alternative vision for how we're going to grow the economy and make sure that anybody who works hard in this country can get ahead. This has become the least productive Congress in modern history, recent memory. And that's by objective measures, just basic activity.

At a time when the economy is actually poised to take off, at a time where we fully—where we finally have recovered from the most crippling economic crisis since the Great Depression, at a time when the private sector has created close to 9 million new jobs and the housing market is recovering and we've got an energy boom going on in this country like we've never seen in a very long time and the dropout rate is coming down and we've just got a lot of things going for us—and yet we've still got a lot of competition from countries like China and Germany—and this can be the American century just like the 20th century was if we make some good decisions. If we're investing in early childhood education; if we're investing in rebuilding our roads and our infrastructure—because I've got to tell you, driving here from the airport, it was a little bumpy. [*Laughter*] And if you think the potholes are bad here, imagine what they're like where we had one of the worst winters in recent memory.

If we invest in basic science and research; if we have a smarter Tax Code that rewards investment and rewards hard work instead of being rife with loopholes that is good business for a lot of accounting firms, but isn't producing any value in our economy; if we're training our workers for the jobs that are out there right now; if we're making our high schools more effective—if we take some of these basic steps, we are poised to own the next couple of decades. And when I travel overseas, what's fascinating is the degree to which other leaders look at us with envy: You guys have the best cards. And yet they look at Washington, and they say, why is it that things are so dysfunctional?

And that's why I'm here today to talk to you, because we have to have a Congress that works; not one that is—march in lockstep, not one that agrees with every proposal I put forward, but a Congress that is serious about governance and is thinking about the next generation and not just the next election.

You take an issue like immigration reform. Everybody agrees that it's broken. You've got law enforcement, you've got the evangelical community, you've got the business community, you've got the agricultural sector, you've got immigrants' rights advocates—across the board, everybody says we can fix this thing. It will be good for families that are being torn apart. It will be something that adds value to our economy. It will reduce—it will actually reduce—our deficit because we're bringing people out of the shadows. We got a bipartisan vote out of the Senate, and yet we cannot even get a vote in the House of Representatives. And it's not because it doesn't make sense. It's not because there's some serious dispute or technical difference in terms of policy. It has to do with politics.

And we've got to stop that. We don't have time for it. Too much is at stake. There are too many families out here who, even though the economy is growing, are still trapped in stagnant wages and stagnant incomes and still struggling to make ends meet at the end of the month. And if we were taking some basic steps—minimum wage? Three-quarters of the country agrees we should raise the minimum wage. Now, usually, when three-quarters of the country agree on something—and that's not that often—politicians rush to get that thing done. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Don't—I agree. Eden agrees with me. [*Laughter*]

Well, why are we doing it? The fact of the matter is, is that you've got a Congress right now that is solely focused on obstruction because they think it's a good political strategy. And here's my challenge to you. Here's the disconcerting thing. Obstruction may actually be

a good political strategy if Democrats don't vote in the midterms. On every issue of importance, Democrats actually have the better argument, and we have majority opinion behind us. But we have this congenital disease, which is in midterm elections, we don't vote at the same rates. Our voters are younger, more unmarried women, more African American and Latino voters. They get excited about general elections; they don't get as excited about midterm elections.

And what's compounding the problem is obviously the massive amounts of money that are coming from super PACs on the other side and active efforts to discourage people from voting, which is another thing I don't understand, but apparently, is fairly active here in Texas. The idea that you'd purposely try to prevent people from voting——

Audience member. Un-American.

The President. Un-American. How is it that we're putting up with that when we don't have to? But it requires a level of organization and a level of effort that has to be coordinated and has to be executed. And that's why your presence here tonight is so important. We need you to take these midterms as seriously as any Presidential election that you've ever been involved in. It may not be as sexy, it may not get as much publicity, but it is as important to the future of our children and our grandchildren as anything else we're going to do. And you have to feel a sense of urgency about it.

Michelle promised me—or Michelle made me promise that 2012 was going to be my last campaign. This is my last campaign; this is—this counts. And I know you wouldn't be here if you didn't agree with that. So the good news is, if in fact we work hard, if we execute, I'm actually confident that we can do very, very well in this midterm election, and more importantly, by doing well, we can do well by the American people.

So thank you very much, everybody. I'll take a couple questions. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:56 p.m. at the residence of Sheridan Williams and John Eddie Williams, Jr. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor William H. White of Houston, TX; former Gov. Mark W. White, Jr., of Texas; Sfc. Daniel M. Ferguson, USA, S. Sgt. Carlos A. Lazaney-Rodriguez, USA, and Sgt. Timothy W. Owens, USA, who were killed in the April 2 shooting at Fort Hood, TX; and U.S. senatorial candidate Terry Lynn Land of Michigan. He also referred to Executive Order 13665, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library Civil Rights Summit in Austin, Texas
April 10, 2014

Please, please, have a seat. Thank you.

What a singular honor it is for me to be here today. I want to thank, first and foremost, the Johnson family for giving us this opportunity and the graciousness with which Michelle and I have been received.

We came down a little bit late because we were upstairs looking at some of the exhibits and some of the private offices that were used by President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson. And Michelle was in particular interested to—of a recording in which Lady Bird is critiquing President Johnson's performance. [*Laughter*] And she said, "Come, come, you need to listen to this." [*Laughter*] And she pressed the button and nodded her head. Some things do not change—[*laughter*]—even 50 years later.

To all the Members of Congress, the warriors for justice, the elected officials and community leaders who are here today, I want to thank you.

Four days into his sudden Presidency—and the night before he would address a Joint Session of the Congress in which he once served—Lyndon Johnson sat around a table

with his closest advisers, preparing his remarks to a shattered and grieving nation.

He wanted to call on Senators and Representatives to pass a civil rights bill, the most sweeping since Reconstruction. And most of his staff counseled him against it. They said it was hopeless; that it would anger powerful Southern Democrats and committee chairmen; that it risked derailing the rest of his domestic agenda. And one particularly bold aide said he did not believe a President should spend his time and power on lost causes, however worthy they might be. To which, it is said, President Johnson replied, "Well, what the hell's the Presidency for?" [*Laughter*] What the hell's the Presidency for if not to fight for causes you believe in?

Today, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, we honor the men and women who made it possible. Some of them are here today. We celebrate giants like John Lewis and Andrew Young and Julian Bond. We recall the countless unheralded Americans—Black and White, students and scholars, preachers and housekeepers—whose names are etched not on monuments, but in the hearts of their loved ones and in the fabric of the country that they helped to change.

But we also gather here, deep in the heart of the State that shaped him, to recall one giant man's remarkable efforts to make real the promise of our founding: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

Those of us who have had the singular privilege to hold the office of the Presidency know well that progress in this country can be hard and it can be slow, frustrating, and sometimes, you're stymied. The office humbles you. You're reminded daily that in this great democracy, you are but a relay swimmer in the currents of history, bound by decisions made by those who came before, reliant on the efforts of those who will follow to fully vindicate your vision.

But the Presidency also affords a unique opportunity to bend those currents: by shaping our laws and by shaping our debates; by working within the confines of the world as it is, but also by reimagining the world as it should be. This was President Johnson's genius. As a master of politics and the legislative process, he grasped like few others the power of government to bring about change.

LBJ was nothing if not a realist. He was well aware that the law alone isn't enough to change hearts and minds. A full century after Lincoln's time, he said, "Until justice is blind to color, until education is unaware of race, until opportunity is unconcerned with the color of men's skins, emancipation will be a proclamation, but not a fact."

He understood laws couldn't accomplish everything. But he also knew that only the law could anchor change and set hearts and minds on a different course. And a lot of Americans needed the law's most basic protections at that time. As Dr. King said at the time, "It may be true that the law can't make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important."

And passing laws was what LBJ knew how to do. No one knew politics and no one loved legislating more than President Johnson. He was charming when he needed to be, ruthless when required. [*Laughter*] He could wear you down with logic and argument. He could horse trade, and he could flatter. "You come with me on this bill," he would reportedly tell a key Republican leader from my home State during the fight for the civil rights bill, "and 200 years from now, schoolchildren will know only two names: Abraham Lincoln and Everett Dirksen!" [*Laughter*] And he knew that Senators would believe things like that. [*Laughter*]

President Johnson liked power. He liked the feel of it, the wielding of it. But that hunger was harnessed and redeemed by a deeper understanding of the human condition; by a sympathy for the underdog, for the downtrodden, for the outcast. And it was a sympathy rooted in his own experience.

As a young boy growing up in the Texas Hill Country, Johnson knew what being poor felt like. "Poverty was so common," he would later say, "we didn't even know it had a name." [*Laughter*] The family home didn't have electricity or indoor plumbing. Everybody worked hard, including the children. President

Johnson had known the metallic taste of hunger; the feel of a mother's calloused hands, rubbed raw from washing and cleaning and holding a household together. His cousin Ava remembered sweltering days spent on her hands and knees in the cotton fields, with Lyndon whispering beside her: "Boy, there's got to be a better way to make a living than this. There's got to be a better way."

It wasn't until years later when he was teaching at a so-called Mexican school in a tiny town in Texas that he came to understand how much worse the persistent pain of poverty could be for other races in a Jim Crow South. Oftentimes, his students would show up to class hungry. And when he'd visit their homes, he'd meet fathers who were paid slave wages by the farmers they worked for. Those children were taught, he would later say, "that the end of life is in a beet row, a spinach field, or a cotton patch."

Deprivation and discrimination: These were not abstractions to Lyndon Baines Johnson. He knew that poverty and injustice are as inseparable as opportunity and justice are joined. So that was in him from an early age.

Now, like any of us, he was not a perfect man. His experiences in rural Texas may have stretched his moral imagination, but he was ambitious, very ambitious, a young man in a hurry to plot his own escape from poverty and to chart his own political career. And in the Jim Crow South, that meant not challenging convention. During his first 20 years in Congress, he opposed every civil rights bill that came up for a vote, once calling the push for Federal legislation "a farce and a sham." He was chosen as a Vice Presidential nominee in part because of his affinity with—and ability to deliver—that Southern White vote. And at the beginning of the Kennedy administration, he shared with President Kennedy a caution towards racial controversy.

But marchers kept marching. Four little girls were killed in a church. Bloody Sunday happened. The winds of change blew. And when the time came, when LBJ stood in the Oval Office—I picture him standing there, taking up the entire doorframe, looking out over the South Lawn in a quiet moment—and asked himself what the true purpose of his office was for, what was the endpoint of his ambitions, he would reach back in his own memory, and he'd remember his own experience with want.

And he knew that he had a unique capacity, as the most powerful White politician from the South, to not merely challenge the convention that had crushed the dreams of so many, but to ultimately dismantle for good the structures of legal segregation. He's the only guy who could do it. And he knew there would be a cost, famously saying the Democratic Party may "have lost the South for a generation."

That's what his Presidency was for. That's where he meets his moment. And possessed with an iron will, possessed with those skills that he had honed so many years in Congress, pushed and supported by a movement of those willing to sacrifice everything for their own liberation, President Johnson fought for and argued and horse traded and bullied and persuaded until ultimately, he signed the Civil Rights Act into law.

And he didn't stop there, even though his advisers again told him to wait, again told him, let the dust settle, let the country absorb this momentous decision. He shook them off. "The meat in the coconut," as President Johnson would put it, was the Voting Rights Act, so he fought for and passed that as well. Immigration reform came shortly after. And then, a Fair Housing Act. And then, a health care law that opponents described as "socialized medicine" that would curtail America's freedom, but ultimately freed millions of seniors from the fear that illness could rob them of dignity and security in their golden years, which we now know today as Medicare.

What President Johnson understood was that equality required more than the absence of oppression. It required the presence of economic opportunity. He wouldn't be as eloquent as Dr. King would be in describing that linkage, as Dr. King moved into mobilizing sanitation workers and a poor people's movement, but he understood that connection because he had lived it. A decent job, decent wages, health care—those too were civil rights

worth fighting for. An economy where hard work is rewarded and success is shared, that was his goal. And he knew, as someone who had seen the New Deal transform the landscape of his Texas childhood, who had seen the difference electricity had made because of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the transformation concretely day in and day out in the life of his own family, he understood that Government had a role to play in broadening prosperity to all those who would strive for it.

"We want to open the gates to opportunity," President Johnson said, "but we are also going to give all our people, Black and White, the help they need to walk through those gates."

Now, if some of this sounds familiar, it's because today, we remain locked in this same great debate about equality and opportunity and the role of government in ensuring each. As was true 50 years ago, there are those who dismiss the Great Society as a failed experiment and an encroachment on liberty; who argue that government has become the true source of all that ails us and that poverty is due to the moral failings of those who suffer from it. There are also those who argue, John, that nothing has changed; that racism is so embedded in our DNA that there is no use trying politics. The game is rigged.

But such theories ignore history. Yes, it's true that despite laws like the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act and Medicare, our society is still racked with division and poverty. Yes, race still colors our political debates, and there have been government programs that have fallen short. In a time when cynicism is too often passed off as wisdom, it's perhaps easy to conclude that there are limits to change; that we are trapped by our own history; and politics is a fool's errand; and we'd be better off if we roll back big chunks of LBJ's legacy, or at least if we don't put too much of our hope, invest too much of our hope, in our government.

I reject such thinking. Not just because Medicare and Medicaid have lifted millions from suffering; not just because the poverty rate in this Nation would be far worse without food stamps and Head Start and all the Great Society programs that survive to this day. I reject such cynicism because I have lived out the promise of LBJ's efforts; because Michelle has lived out the legacy of those efforts; because my daughters have lived out the legacy of those efforts; because I and millions of my generation were in a position to take the baton that he handed to us.

Because of the civil rights movement, because of the laws President Johnson signed, new doors of opportunity and education swung open for everybody, not all at once, but they swung open. Not just Blacks and Whites, but also women and Latinos and Asians and Native Americans and gay Americans and Americans with a disability. They swung open for you, and they swung open for me. And that's why I'm standing here today, because of those efforts, because of that legacy.

And that means we've got a debt to pay. That means we can't afford to be cynical. Half a century later, the laws LBJ passed are now as fundamental to our conception of ourselves and our democracy as the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. They are foundational, an essential piece of the American character.

But we are here today because we know we cannot be complacent. For history travels not only forwards, history can travel backwards; history can travel sideways. And securing the gains this country has made requires the vigilance of its citizens. Our rights, our freedoms, they are not given. They must be won. They must be nurtured through struggle and discipline and persistence and faith.

And one concern I have sometimes during these moments—the celebration of the signing of the Civil Rights Act, the March on Washington—from a distance, sometimes, these commemorations seem inevitable, they seem easy. All the pain and difficulty and struggle and doubt, all that's rubbed away. And we look at ourselves, and we say, oh, things are just too different now; we couldn't possibly do what was done then—these giants, what they accomplished. And yet they were men and women too. It wasn't easy then. It wasn't certain then.

Still, the story of America is a story of progress. However slow, however incomplete, however harshly challenged at each point on our journey, however flawed our leaders, however many times we have to take a quarter of a loaf or half a loaf, the story of America is a story of progress. And that's true because of men like President Lyndon Baines Johnson.

In so many ways, he embodied America, with all our gifts and all our flaws, in all our restlessness and all our big dreams. This man—born into poverty, weaned in a world full of racial hatred—somehow found within himself the ability to connect his experience with the Brown child in a small Texas town; the White child in Appalachia; the Black child in Watts. As powerful as he became in that Oval Office, he understood them. He understood what it meant to be on the outside. And he believed that their plight was his plight too, that his freedom ultimately was wrapped up in theirs, and that making their lives better was what the hell the Presidency was for.

And those children were on his mind when he strode to the podium that night in the House Chamber, when he called for the vote on the civil rights law. "It never occurred to me," he said, "in my fondest dreams that I might have the chance to help the sons and daughters of those students" that he had taught so many years ago, "and to help people like them all over this country. But now I do have that chance—and I'll let you in on a secret—I mean to use it. And I hope that you will use it with me."

That was LBJ's greatness. That's why we remember him. And if there is one thing that he and this year's anniversary should teach us, if there's one lesson I hope that Malia and Sasha and young people everywhere learn from this day, it's that with enough effort and enough empathy and enough perseverance and enough courage, people who love their country can change it.

In his final year, President Johnson stood on this stage, racked with pain, battered by the controversies of Vietnam, looking far older than his 64 years, and he delivered what would be his final public speech. "We have proved that great progress is possible," he said. "We know how much still remains to be done. And if our efforts continue, and if our will is strong, and if our hearts are right, and if courage remains our constant companion, then, my fellow Americans, I am confident, we shall overcome."

We shall overcome. We, the citizens of the United States. Like Dr. King, like Abraham Lincoln, like countless citizens who have driven this country inexorably forward, President Johnson knew that ours in the end is a story of optimism, a story of achievement and constant striving that is unique upon this Earth. He knew because he had lived that story. He believed that together we can build an America that is more fair, more equal, and more free than the one we inherited. He believed we make our own destiny. And in part because of him, we must believe it as well.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:16 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to former U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Andrew J. Young, Jr.; and Julian Bond, chairman, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Statement on the Minnesota Legislature's Passage of Legislation To Raise the Minimum Wage

April 10, 2014

Today the Minnesota Legislature took action to increase the State minimum wage, giving more hard-working Minnesotans the raise they deserve. With this important step, Minnesota joins a growing coalition of States, cities, counties, and businesses that have taken action to do the right thing for their workers and their citizens. I commend the State legis-

lature for raising their minimum wage, and we look forward to Governor Dayton signing the bill into law soon. I urge Congress to follow Minnesota's lead, raise the Federal minimum wage, and lift wages for 28 million Americans. Congress should listen to the majority of Americans who say it's time to give America a raise and help ensure that no American who works full time has to raise a family in poverty.

Remarks on the Resignation of Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Nomination of Sylvia Mathews Burwell To Be Secretary of Health and Human Services

April 11, 2014

The President. Hey! All right, everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Have a seat. Well, good morning. In my sixth year in office, I am extraordinarily grateful to have so many aides and advisers who have been there since the earliest days. But it's still somewhat bittersweet when any of them leave for new endeavors, even when their successor is wonderful.

In early March, Kathleen Sebelius, my Secretary of Health and Human Services, told me she'd be moving on once the first open enrollment period under the Affordable Care Act came to an end. And after 5 years of extraordinary service to our country, and 7½ million Americans who have signed up for health coverage through the exchanges, she's earned that right. I will miss her advice. I will miss her friendship. I will miss her wit. But I am proud to nominate someone to succeed her who holds those same traits in abundance: Sylvia Mathews Burwell.

Now, just a couple things about Kathleen. When I nominated Kathleen more than 5 years ago, she—I had gotten to know Kathleen when she was Governor at Kansas and had shown extraordinary skills there, was a great adviser and supporter during my Presidential campaign, and so I knew that she was up for what was a tough job—I mentioned to her that one of her many responsibilities at HHS would be to make sure our country is prepared for a pandemic flu outbreak. I didn't know at the time that that would literally be her first task. [*Laughter*] Nobody remembers that now, but it was. And it just gives you a sense of the sorts of daily challenges that Kathleen has handled, often without fanfare, often unacknowledged, but that have been critical to the health and welfare of the American people.

She has fought to improve children's health, from birth to kindergarten, expanded maternal health care, reduced racial and ethnic disparities, brought us closer to the first AIDS-free generation. She's been a tireless advocate for women's health.

And of course, what Kathleen will go down in history for is serving as the Secretary of Health and Human Services when the United States of America finally declared that quality, affordable health care is not a privilege, but it is a right for every single citizen of these United States of America.

Kathleen has been here through the long fight to pass the Affordable Care Act. She helped guide its implementation, even when it got rough. She's got bumps. I've got bumps, bruises. But we did it because we knew of all the people that we had met, all across the country, who had lost a home, had put off care, had decided to stay with a job instead of start a business, because they were uncertain about their health care situation. We had met families who had seen their children suffer because of the uncertainty of health care. And we were committed to get this done. And that's what we've done, and that's what Kathleen's done.

Yes, we lost the first quarter of open enrollment period with the problems with healthcare.gov, and they were problems. But under Kathleen's leadership, her team at HHS turned the corner, got it fixed, got the job done, and the final score speaks for itself: There are 7½ million people across the country that have the security of health insurance, most

of them for the very first time. And that's because of the woman standing next to me here today. And we are proud of her for that. That's a historic accomplishment. [*Applause*] That's right.

And by the way, in the meantime, alongside 7½ million people being enrolled, health care costs under Kathleen's leadership are growing at their slowest rate in 50 years. I keep on reading folks saying, "Oh, they're not doing anything about cost," except they're growing at the slowest rate in 50 years. What does that mean? That's in part because of Kathleen's extraordinary leadership.

Health records are moving from dog-eared paper to high-tech systems. Kathleen partnered with the Department of Justice to aggressively pursue health care fraud and return billions of dollars—record sums—to the Medicare Trust Fund.

So, all told, Kathleen's work over the past 5 years will benefit our families and this country for decades to come. So we want to thank Kathleen's husband Gary, the "First Dude" of Kansas. [*Laughter*] We've got two outstanding sons, Ned and John, who have been willing to share their mom with us these past 5 years. And, Kathleen, I know that your dad, who served as Governor of Ohio and who inspired you to pursue public service and who passed away last year, would have been so proud of you today. So, Kathleen, we want to thank you once again for your service to our country. [*Applause*] Yay! Hey!

Now, we know there's still more work to do at HHS. There's more work to do to implement the Affordable Care Act. There's another enrollment period coming up about 6 months from now. There's a whole array of responsibilities to meet over at this large and very important agency. And I could choose no manager as experienced, as competent as my current Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Sylvia Mathews Burwell.

Now, Sylvia is from a small town: Hinton, West Virginia. So she brings the common sense that you see in small towns. She brings the values of caring about your neighbor and ordinary folks to some of the biggest and most complex challenges of her time. She's a proven manager who's demonstrated her ability to field great teams, forge strong relationships, and deliver excellent results at the highest levels. And she's done it both in the public and private sectors.

As COO and later president for global development of the Gates Foundation, Sylvia worked on the cutting edge of the world's most pressing health challenges. As the head of the Walmart Foundation and a member of the board at MetLife, she gained firsthand experience into how insurance markets work and how they can work better for businesses and families alike.

Here, as my Budget Director at the White House, she's already delivered results. After all, in the year since she arrived, the deficit has plunged by more than $400 billion. I'm just saying. [*Laughter*] So that's happened during that time.

When the Government was forced to shut down last October, and even as most of her own team was barred from reporting to work, Sylvia was a rock, a steady hand on the wheel, who helped navigate the country through a very challenging time. Once the Government was allowed to reopen, Sylvia was vital to winning the 2-year budget agreement that put an end to these manufactured crises that we had seen here in Washington so that we could keep our full focus on growing the economy and creating new jobs and expanding opportunity for everybody who is seeking opportunity. And all the while, she's helped advance important initiatives to bring the Government into the 21st century, including her efforts to speed up job creation by dramatically speeding up the permitting process for big infrastructure projects.

So Sylvia is a proven manager, and she knows how to deliver results. And she'll need to be a proven manager because these are tough tasks, big challenges. From covering more families with economic security that health insurance provides to ensuring the safety of our food and drug supply, to protecting the country from outbreak or bioterror attacks, to keeping America at the forefront of job-creating medical research, all of us rely on the

dedicated servants and scientists, the researchers at HHS and the FDA and CDC and NIH. All of them are an extraordinary team, and sometimes, the American people take for granted the incredible network of outstanding public servants that we have who are helping to keep us healthy and helping to improve our lives every single day.

So I want to thank Stephen, Sylvia's husband, and Mathew and Helene for sharing wife and mom with us a little bit longer. We'll miss seeing you around the White House, but I know that you're going to do an outstanding job as America's Secretary of Health and Human Services. I hope that the Senate confirms Sylvia without delay. She's going to do great. Last time, she was confirmed unanimously; I'm assuming not that much has changed since that time. [*Laughter*]

And with that, I want to give them both an opportunity to say a few words, starting with Kathleen.

Secretary Sebelius. Thank you. Well, I want to start by thanking you, Mr. President, and Mr. Vice President, for giving me the opportunity of a lifetime to serve in this Cabinet. I want to thank my HHS family, many of whom are here—at least the health leaders are here—for their incredible work. And my personal family, represented today by our older son Ned and my wonderful daughter-in-law Lisa; my husband Gary is on the bench in Kansas today doing multiple hearings, which he does each and every day, and our younger son is in Ecuador. But they're with us in spirit.

The President has already made this case, but I want to remake it. HHS is an amazing department. It's full of bright and talented and hard-working people who believe strongly in our important mission: providing health care and essential human services to all Americans.

Now, inscribed on the walls of the Humphrey Building, where your office will be, are the words of the namesake. And what Hubert Humphrey said is, "The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadow of life." And that really, I think, describes what we do at HHS.

From our work on birth-to-kindergarten initiatives to providing for the elderly and disabled, our employees help their friends and neighbors every day. The researchers in NIH labs and scientists working to improve new drugs and devices are helping change the face of humanity by advancing new cures, research, and innovation. We're advancing public health in the U.S. and around the globe with antismoking efforts and promoting maternal and child health.

Finally, behavioral health and physical health issues will be considered both part of a essential treatment, and that's a big step forward. Our workers, as the President said, look out for a safe and secure food and drug supply in a global market. And our smart diplomacy, sharing health expertise and advances, win the hearts and minds of nations across the globe. We have done transformational work in tribal communities across this country that will never be the same again.

So at any point in our history, that mission would be highly rewarding and some of the most important work anybody could do. But I've had an additional amazing opportunity—no one has ever had this before—I got to be a leader of HHS during these most historic times. We are on the front lines of a long overdue national change: fixing a broken health system. Now, this is the most meaningful work I've ever been a part of. In fact, it's been the cause of my life. And I knew it wouldn't be easy. There's a reason that no earlier President was successful in passing health reform, despite decades of attempts.

But throughout the legislative battles, the Supreme Court challenge, a contentious reelection, and years of votes to turn back the clock, we are making progress, tremendous progress. And critics and supporters alike are benefiting from this law. My professional work as a legislator and insurance commissioner and a Governor have been tremendously helpful in navigating the policy and politics of this historic change.

But at the end of the day, health is personal. It's personal to all of us. Family illnesses and personal health challenges touch us to our core. I've spent time as a daughter navigating care for ill parents. As a mother and now a grandmother, I have experienced and worried about prenatal care and healthy babies. We've had family health challenges, as all of us have. And finding the right care can be difficult even with the best contacts and the right resources.

So the personal reward for me at the end of the day are the folks who approach me, the strangers who approach me at a meeting or pass me a note on a plane or hand me a phone with someone on the other end saying thank you. Their stories are so heartening, about finally feeling secure and knowing they can take care of themselves and their families.

[*At this point, Secretary Sebelius flipped through her speech binder.*]

Unfortunately, a page is missing. [*Laughter*]

So I'm just grateful for having had this wonderful opportunity. The President was in Austin yesterday at the LBJ Library, commemorating 50 years in the civil rights efforts led by Lyndon Johnson. And 50 years ago, my father was part of that historic Congress. He served in the Congress with the passage of Medicare and Medicaid, with Head Start. And those programs are now in the agency I've had the honor to lead. It seems like a wonderful passing of the baton.

And the Affordable Care Act is the most significant social change in this country in that 50-year period of time. So I am so grateful to have had this opportunity. I appreciate all of the effort and support. I thank my Cabinet colleagues who are here on the front row. And not only are they here today on the front row, but they've been part of an all-hands-on-deck effort making sure that that 7½ million people were able to sign up for affordable health care.

So thank you, Mr. President. And what I know is that Sylvia—in the year I've had the opportunity to work with her—is a trusted and valued friend, a great partner. She will be a terrific leader for HHS. So I'll turn it over to Sylvia.

Secretary-designate Burwell. First, I'd like to thank you, Mr. President and Mr. Vice President, for the trust you've placed in me at my role at OMB and your confidence in nominating me for this new role.

Second, I—as we all honor Kathleen's accomplishments here today, I also want to personally thank her for her support and friendship through this year. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the team at the Office of Management and Budget and to our congressional counterparts, with whom I've had the privilege to work closely throughout this year.

OMB is an extraordinary institution. It's a credit to the professionalism and commitment of OMB's people that we've been able to meaningfully improve our Nation's fiscal policy and Government management over the past year. I also want to thank my family, especially my husband Stephen. It's their support that allows me to serve.

I'm humbled, honored, and excited by the opportunity to build on the achievements that Kathleen, the President, and so many others have put in place. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to carrying on the important work of ensuring that children, families, and seniors have the building blocks of healthy and productive lives, whether it's through implementing the Affordable Care Act, supporting affordable childcare, or finding new frontiers to prevent and treat disease.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Give these extraordinary women one more big round of applause. Thank you, Kathleen, for your service. Thank you, Sylvia, for your great work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:54 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to K. Gary Sebelius, husband of Secretary Sebelius, and their sons Edward and John; and Stephen Burwell, husband of Secretary-designate Burwell, and their children Matthew and Helene. Secretary Sebelius referred to her daughter-in-law Lisa A. Rockefeller.

Remarks at the National Action Network's 16th Annual Convention in New York City

April 11, 2014

The President. Hello, New York! Thank you. Thank you so much. It is good to be at the National Action Network. It is good to be here with some good friends.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. That's why I'm here.

It is wonderful to be with all of you. I want to say, first of all, thank you to your leader, Reverend Al Sharpton. Give him a big round of applause. And I appreciate the idea of being an "action" President, although I do also have style—[*laughter*]—I just want to point that out. I know it's not about it, but I just—but I do have it. [*Laughter*] Al is not the only guy with style.

We've got Barbara Arnwine here today, and we want to thank her. Clayola Brown, thank you. Melanie Campbell, thank you. Marc Morial, thank you. We've got Members of Congress, State and local officials from New York. And of course, we've got all of you. So thanks to all of you for such a wonderful welcome.

Everybody, sit down. [*Laughter*] Sit down. Al doesn't know how to get back to his seat. [*Laughter*] Help—somebody help out the leader here. But don't make him jump over it. Okay, they're going to explain it. There we go. All right. You're going to be all right. [*Laughter*]

Now, the last time I was here was 3 years ago, and a few things have changed since then. I am here as a second-term President. I have more gray hair. [*Laughter*] It's all right. Let's see, what else? I've got twice as many dogs. I'm glad I won't have to serve a third term, because three dogs is too many. I can't keep on promising Malia and Sasha another dog.

Of course, one thing that has not changed is your commitment to the cause of civil rights for everybody and opportunity for all people. And that's been something that's been on my mind this week. Some of you may know that yesterday I was down in Austin, Texas, at the LBJ Library to speak on the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act and the man who signed it into law. And standing there, I thought of all the Americans, known and unknown, who made it possible for me to stand in that spot, who marched and organized and sat in and stood up for jobs and for justice. And I thought of all who achieved that great victory and others, not just with respect to the Civil Rights Act, but the Voting Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act and immigration reform and Medicare and Medicaid and the first battles of a long War on Poverty.

And over the past 5 years, in the wake of the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, we've won some victories too. Nearly 9 million new jobs at America's businesses over the past 4 years. Seven and a half million Americans signing up to buy health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act. And millions more who have gained coverage through Medicaid and CHIP and young people being able to stay on their parents' plans. The rate of uninsured Americans is down. High school dropout rates are down. Our high school graduation rate is the highest on record. More young people are earning college degrees than ever before. We've made progress, and we've taken action.

But we also know our work is unfinished. Too many Americans working harder than ever just to get by. Too many Americans who aren't working at all. So we we're getting—we know we have to do more to restore America's promise of opportunity for all people, particularly for communities hardest hit by the recession, particularly for those who struggled since long before the recession, not only African Americans and Latinos, but Americans trapped across the country in pockets of poverty: inner city, suburban, rural.

And we know what opportunity means. Opportunity means more good jobs that pay good wages. Opportunity means training folks for those jobs. Opportunity means changing the odds for all of our children through pre-K, something Mayor de Blasio is fighting for here in New York City. And it—opportunity means

affordable higher education for all who are willing to work for it. Opportunity means answering the call to be my brother's keeper and helping more boys and young men of color stay on track and reach their full potential.

Before I came out, I was in a photo line, saw my good friend Freddie Haynes, a great pastor from the great State of Texas. And he told me this summer they're going to hire 100 young men, pay them $10.10 an hour—maybe $10.50—as a consequence of this call. And the point is, is that "My Brother's Keeper," that's not just something I do, that's not just something the Government does. That's something everybody can participate in, because we know these young men need support.

Opportunity means making the minimum wage a wage you can live on. It means equal pay for equal work. It means overtime pay for workers who've earned it. It means continuing to extend the right of quality, affordable health care for every American in every State, because we've got some States that aren't doing the right thing. We have States who just out of political spite are leaving millions of people uninsured that could be getting health insurance right now. No good reason for it. If you ask them what's the explanation, they can't really tell you.

And by the way, making sure our citizens have the opportunity to lead healthy lives also means dealing with things like the dangerous carbon pollution that's disproportionately affecting low-income communities. It means making sure that our young people are eating right, so listen to Michelle. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying.

So we know we've got more work to do to bridge the gap between our founding ideals and the realities of our time. And the question then becomes, well, how do we actually make these changes? How does it happen? How do we get a minimum wage bill passed? How do we make sure that those States that aren't yet implementing Affordable Care Act actually are doing right by their citizens? It means being vigilant. We've got to be vigilant to secure the gains we've made, but also to make more gains in the future.

And that's the meaning of these last 50 years since the Civil Rights Act was passed. Because across the country, right now there are well-organized and well-funded efforts to undo these gains. And one of those gains is under particular assault right now, and that's what I want to spend the rest of my time here talking about.

Just as inequality feeds on injustice, opportunity requires justice. And justice requires the right to vote. Johnson—President Johnson, right after he signed the Civil Rights Act into law, told his advisers—some of whom were telling him, well, all right, just wait; you've done a big thing now; let's let the dust settle, don't stir folks up. He said, no, no, I can't wait. We've got to press forward and pass the Voting Rights Act. Johnson said: "About this there can and should be no argument. Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote."

Voting is a time when we all have an equal say: Black or White, rich or poor, man or woman. Doesn't matter. In the eyes of the law and in the eyes of our democracy, we're all supposed to have that equal right to cast our ballot to help determine the direction of our society.

The principle of one person, one vote is the single greatest tool we have to redress an unjust status quo. You would think there would not be an argument about this anymore. But the stark, simple truth is this: The right to vote is threatened today in a way that it has not been since the Voting Rights Act became law nearly five decades ago.

Across the country, Republicans have led efforts to pass laws making it harder, not easier, for people to vote. In some places, women could be turned away from polls just because they're registered under their maiden name, but their driver's license has their married name. Senior citizens who have been voting for decades may suddenly be told they can no longer vote until they can come up with the right ID.

In other places, folks may learn that without a document like a passport or a birth certificate, they can't register. About 60 percent of Americans don't have a passport. Just because you don't have the money to travel abroad doesn't mean you shouldn't be able to vote here at home. And just to be clear, I know where my

birth certificate is, but a lot of people don't. [*Laughter*] A lot of people don't. I think it's still up on a website somewhere. [*Laughter*] You remember that? That was crazy. That was some crazy stuff. [*Laughter*] I hadn't thought about that in a while. [*Laughter*]

Now, I want to be clear: I am not against reasonable attempts to secure the ballot. We understand that there has to be rules in place. But I am against requiring an ID that millions of Americans don't have. That shouldn't suddenly prevent you from exercising your right to vote.

The first words put to paper in our American story tell us that all of us are created equal. And we understand that it took a long time to make sure that those words meant something. But 50 years ago, we put laws in place, because of enormous struggles, to vindicate that idea, to make our democracy truly mean something. And that makes it wrong to pass laws that make it harder for any eligible citizen to vote, especially because every citizen doesn't just have the right to vote, they have a responsibility to vote.

So yes, we're right to be on guard against voter fraud. Voter fraud would impinge on our democracy as well. We don't want folks voting that shouldn't be voting. We all agree on that. Let's stipulate to that, as the lawyers say.

But there's a reason why those who argue that harsh restrictions on voting are somehow necessary to fight voter fraud are having such a hard time proving any real, widespread voter fraud. So I just want to give you some statistics. One recent study found only 10 cases of alleged in-person voter impersonation in 12 years—10 cases. Another analysis found that out of 197 million votes cast for Federal elections between 2002 and 2005, only 40 voters—out of 197 million—were indicted for fraud. Now, for those of you who are math majors, as a percentage, that is 0.00002 percent. [*Laughter*] That's not a lot. So let's be clear: The real voter fraud is people who try to deny our rights by making bogus arguments about voter fraud.

And I have to say, there have been some—some of these officials who have been passing these laws have been more blunt. They said, this is going to be good for the Republican Party. Some of them have not been shy about saying that they're doing this for partisan reasons.

"It is wrong," President Johnson said, "deadly wrong, to deny any of your fellow Americans the right to vote in this country." It is wrong to change our election rules just because of politics. It is wrong to make citizens wait for 5, 6, 7 hours just to vote. It is wrong to make a senior citizen who no longer has a driver's license jump through hoops and have to pay money just to exercise the rights she has cherished for a lifetime. America did not stand up and did not march and did not sacrifice to gain the right to vote for themselves and for others only to see it denied to their kids and their grandchildren. We've got to pay attention to this.

Some of the folks from Chicago know—Crider knows—one of the first jobs I had out of law school was to lead a voter registration drive in my home State of Illinois. We registered more than 150,000 new voters. And as an organizer, I got to help other citizens exercise their most cherished and fundamental rights. That mattered to me.

And as President, I'm not going to let attacks on these rights go unchallenged. We're not going to let voter suppression go unchallenged. So earlier this week, you heard from the Attorney General, and there's a reason the agency he runs is called the Department of Justice. They've taken on more than a hundred voting rights cases since 2009. They've defended the rights of everybody from African Americans to Spanish speakers, to soldiers serving overseas.

Earlier this year, a bipartisan commission I appointed chaired by my election lawyer and Mitt Romney's election lawyer came up with a series of modern—or commonsense reforms to modernize voter registration and to curb the potential for fraud in smart way and ensure that no one has to wait for more than half an hour to cast a ballot. States and local election boards should take up those recommendations. And with the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer almost upon us, I urge Members of Congress to honor those who gave their lives so that others could exercise their rights and

update the Voting Rights Act. Go ahead and get that done.

Do it because the right to vote is something cherished by every American. We should not be having an argument about this. There are a lot of things we can argue about, but the right to vote? I mean, what kind of political platform is that? [*Laughter*] Why would you make that a part of your agenda, preventing people from voting? How can you defend that? There are a whole bunch of folks out there who don't vote for me, didn't vote for me, don't like what I do. The idea that I would prevent them from voting and exercising their franchise makes no sense.

Black or White, man or woman, urban, rural, rich, poor, Native American, disabled, gay, straight, Republican or Democrat—voters who want to vote should be able to vote. Period. Full stop. Voting is not a Democratic issue, it's not a Republican issue. It's an issue of citizenship. It's what makes our democracy strong.

But it's a fact: This recent effort to restrict the vote has not been led by both parties, it's been led by the Republican Party. And in fairness, it's not just Democrats who are concerned. You had one Republican State legislator point out—and I'm quoting here—"Making it more difficult for people to vote is not a good sign for a party that wants to attract more people." [*Laughter*] That was a pretty—that's a good insight. [*Laughter*] Right? I want a competitive Republican Party, just like a competitive Democratic Party. That's how our democracy is supposed to work: the competition of ideas. But I don't want folks changing the rules to try to restrict people's access to the ballot.

And I think responsible people, regardless of your party affiliation, should agree with that. If your strategy depends on having fewer people show up to vote, that's not a sign of strength, that's a sign of weakness.

And not only is it ultimately bad politics. I believe ultimately it harms the entire country. If voting is denied to the many, we risk ending up stuck year after year with special interest policies that benefit a fortunate few. And injustice perpetuates inequality.

But remember, just as injustice perpetuates inequality, justice opens up opportunity. And as infuriating as efforts to roll back hard-earned rights can be, the trajectory of our history has to give us hope. The story of America is a story of progress. No matter how often or how intensely that progress has been challenged, ultimately, this Nation has moved forward. As Dr. King said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, [but]* it bends towards justice." We move forward on civil rights and we move forward on workers' rights, and we move forward on women's rights and disability rights and gay rights. We show that when ordinary citizens come together to participate in this democracy we love, justice will not be denied. So the single most important thing we can do to protect our right to vote is to vote.

So I'm going to make one last point here. We're going to have an Attorney General that looks at all the laws that are being passed. We're going to have civic organizations that are making sure that State laws and local laws are doing what they're supposed to do. We will fight back whenever we see unfairly the franchise being challenged. But the truth is that, for all these laws that are being put in place, the biggest problem we have is people giving up their own power, voluntarily not participating.

The number of people who voluntarily don't vote, who are eligible to vote, dwarfs whatever these laws are put in place might do in terms of diminishing the voting rolls.

So we can't treat these new barriers as an excuse not to participate. We can't use cynicism as an excuse not to participate. Sometimes, I hear people saying, well, we haven't gotten everything we needed. You know? We still have poverty. We still have problems. Of course. These things didn't happen overnight.

When I was down in Texas, everybody was celebrating the day that the civil rights law was finally passed. Remember, there were decades in which people sacrificed and worked hard.

* White House correction.

Change doesn't happen overnight, but it happens as long as we don't purposely give our power away. Every obstacle put in our path should remind us of the power we hold in our hands each time we pull that lever or fill in that oval or touch that screen. We just have to harness that power. We've got to create a national network committed to taking action. We can call it the National Action Network.

So I want you to go out there and redouble your efforts. Register more voters. Help more folks to get their rights. Get those souls to the polls. If they don't let you do it on Sunday, then do it on Tuesday instead. I know it's better going to the polls on Sunday because you go to church, you're getting a little meal. [*Laughter*] You got the bus waiting for you. I understand. But you can do it without that if you—if we have to.

We're at a time when we're marking many anniversaries. And it's interesting for me—I've been on this Earth 52 years, and so to see the progress we've made is to see my own life and the progression that's happened. You think about *Brown* v. *Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act and Freedom Summer. And with those anniversaries, we have new reason to remember those who made it possible for us to be here. Like the three civil rights workers in Mississippi—two White, one Black—who were murdered 50 years ago as they tried to help their fellow citizens register to vote. James Chaney and Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner believed so strongly that change was possible, they were willing to lay down their lives for it. The least you can do is take them up on the gift that they have given you. Go out there and vote. You can make a change. You do have the power.

I've run my last election, but I need you to make sure that the changes that we started continue for decades to come.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:02 p.m. at the Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara R. Arnwine, president and executive director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Clayola Brown, president, A. Philip Randolph Institute; Melanie L. Campbell, president and chief executive officer, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation; Marc H. Morial, president and chief executive officer, National Urban League; Frederick D. Haynes III, senior pastor, Friendship-West Baptist Church in Dallas, TX; Tyrone Crider, pastor, Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Chicago, IL; former White House Counsel Robert F. Bauer and Benjamin L. Ginsberg, partner, Patton Boggs LLP, in their capacity as Cochairs of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration; 2012 Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and Wisconsin State Sen. Dale W. Schultz.

Statement on the Retirement of Deputy Secretary of State William J. Burns
April 11, 2014

Since I met Bill in Moscow in 2005, I have admired his skill and precision. Since I took office, I have relied on him for candid advice and sensitive diplomatic missions. He has been a skilled adviser, consummate diplomat, and inspiration to generations of public servants. Given his vital role on our leading priorities, earlier this year, I asked him to delay his retirement, and I'm grateful to him and Lisa for doing so. The country is stronger for Bill's service.

NOTE: The statement referred to Lisa Carty, wife of Deputy Secretary Burns. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a photograph of the President having lunch with Deputy Secretary Burns in the Private Dining Room at the White House on February 18.

The President's Weekly Address
April 12, 2014

Hi, everybody. Earlier this week was Equal Pay Day. It marks the extra time the average woman has to work into a new year to earn what a man earned the year before. You see, the average woman who works full time in America earns less than a man, even when she's in the same profession and has the same education.

That's wrong. In 2014, it's an embarrassment. Women deserve equal pay for equal work.

This is an economic issue that affects all of us. Women make up about half our workforce. And more and more, they're our families' main breadwinners. So it's good for everyone when women are paid fairly. That's why this week I took action to prohibit more businesses from punishing workers who discuss their salaries. Because more pay transparency makes it easier to spot pay discrimination. And I hope more business leaders will take up this cause.

But equal pay is just one part of an economic agenda for women. Most lower wage workers in America are women. So I've taken executive action to require Federal contractors to pay their federally funded employees at least $10.10 an hour. I ordered a review of our Nation's overtime rules, to give more workers the chance to earn the overtime pay that they deserve.

And thanks to the Affordable Care Act, tens of millions of women are now guaranteed free preventive care like mammograms and contraceptive care, and the days when you could be charged more just for being a woman are over for good. Across the country, we're bringing Americans together to help us make sure that a woman can have a baby without sacrificing her job, or take a day off to care for a sick child or parent without hitting hardship. It's time to do away with workplace policies that belong in a "Mad Men" episode and give every woman the opportunity she deserves.

Here's the problem though. On issues that would benefit millions of women, Republicans in Congress have blocked progress at every turn. Just this week, Senate Republicans blocked the Paycheck Fairness Act, commonsense legislation that would help more women win equal pay for equal work. House Republicans won't vote to raise the minimum wage or extend unemployment insurance for women out of work through no fault of their own. The budget they passed this week would force deep cuts to investments that overwhelmingly benefit women and children, like Medicaid, food stamps, and college grants. And of course, they're trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act for the 50th or so time, which would take away vital benefits and protections from millions of women.

I'm going to keep fighting to make sure that doesn't happen, because we do better when our economy grows for everybody, not just a few. And when women succeed, America succeeds. Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:50 a.m. on April 11 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on April 12. In the address, the President referred to Executive Orders 13658 and 13665, which are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 11, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on April 12.

Statement on the Shootings in Overland Park, Kansas
April 13, 2014

This afternoon we heard reports of a horrific shooting in Overland Park, Kansas. Michelle and I offer our thoughts and prayers to the families and friends who lost a loved one and everyone affected by this tragedy. I have asked my team to stay in close touch with our

Federal, State, and local partners and provide the necessary resources to support the ongoing investigation. While we do not know all of the details surrounding today's shooting, the initial reports are heartbreaking. I want to offer my condolences to all the families trying to make sense of this difficult situation and pledge the full support from the Federal Government as we heal and cope during this trying time.

Remarks at an Easter Prayer Breakfast
April 14, 2014

Please, please have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, good morning, everybody.

Welcome to the White House, and welcome to our annual Easter prayer breakfast. As always, we are blessed to be joined by so many good friends from around the country. We've got distinguished guests. We've got faith leaders, members of my administration who are here. And I will once again resist the temptation to preach to preachers. [*Laughter*] It never works out well. I am reminded of the admonition from the Book of Romans: "Do not claim to be wiser than you are." [*Laughter*] So this morning I want to offer some very brief reflections as we start this Easter season.

But as I was preparing my remarks, something intervened yesterday. And so I want to just devote a few words about yesterday's tragedy in Kansas. This morning our prayers are with the people of Overland Park. And we're still learning the details, but this much we know. A gunman opened fire at two Jewish facilities: a community center and a retirement home. Innocent people were killed. Their families were devastated. And this violence has struck at the heart of the Jewish community in Kansas City.

Two of the victims, a grandfather and his teenage son [grandson],* attended the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, which is led by our friend Reverend Adam Hamilton. Some of you may know that during my Inauguration, Reverend Hamilton delivered the sermon at the prayer service at the National Cathedral. And I was grateful for his presence and his words. He joined us at our breakfast last year. And at the Easter service for Palm Sunday last night, he had to break this terrible news to his congregation.

That this occurred now—as Jews were preparing to celebrate Passover, as Christians were observing Palm Sunday—makes this tragedy all the more painful. And today, as Passover begins, we're seeing a number of synagogues and Jewish community centers take added security precautions. Nobody should have to worry about their security when gathering with their fellow believers. No one should ever have to fear for their safety when they go to pray.

And as a government, we're going to provide whatever assistance is needed to support the investigation. As Americans, we not only need to open our hearts to the families of the victims, we've got to stand united against this kind of terrible violence, which has no place in our society. And we have to keep coming together across faiths to combat the ignorance and intolerance, including anti-Semitism, that can lead to hatred and to violence, because we're all children of God. We're all made in His image, all worthy of his love and dignity. And we see what happens around the world when this kind of religious-based or -tinged violence can rear its ugly head. It's got no place in our society.

So this Easter week, of course, we recognize that there's a lot of pain and a lot of sin and a lot of tragedy in this world, but we're also overwhelmed by the grace of an awesome God. We're reminded how He loves us, so deeply that He gave his only begotten Son so that we might live through Him. And in these Holy Days, we recall all that Jesus endured for us: the scorn of the crowds and the pain of the

* White House correction.

crucifixion. In our Christian religious tradition, we celebrate the glory of the Resurrection, all so that we might be forgiven of our sins and granted everlasting life.

And more than 2,000 years later, it inspires us still. We are drawn to His timeless teachings, challenged to be worthy of His sacrifice, to emulate as best we can His eternal example to love one another just as He loves us. And of course, we're always reminded each and every day that we fall short of that example. And none of us are free from sin, but we can look to His life and strive, knowing that "if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us."

I'll tell you, I felt this spirit when I had the great honor of meeting His Holiness Pope Francis recently. I think it's fair to say that his—those of us of the Christian faith, regardless of our denomination, have been touched and moved by Pope Francis. Now, some of it is his words: his message of justice and inclusion, especially for the poor and the outcast. He implores us to see the inherent dignity in each human being. But it's also his deeds, simple yet profound: hugging the homeless man or washing the feet of somebody who, normally, ordinary folks would just pass by on the street. He reminds us that all of us, no matter what our station, have an obligation to live righteously, and that we all have an obligation to live humbly. Because that's, in fact, the example that we profess to follow.

So I had a wonderful conversations with Pope Francis, mainly about the imperatives of addressing poverty and inequality. And I invited him to come to the United States, and I sincerely hope he will. When we exchanged gifts, he gave me a copy of his inspired writings, "The Joy of the Gospel." And there is a passage that speaks to us today: "Christ's resurrection," he writes, "is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world." And he adds: "Jesus did not rise in vain. May we never remain on the sidelines of this march of living hope!"

So this morning my main message is just to say thank you to all of you, because you don't remain on the sidelines. I want to thank you for your ministries, for your good works, for the marching you do for justice and dignity and inclusion, for the ministries that all of you attend to and have helped organize throughout your communities each and every day to feed the hungry and house the homeless and educate children who so desperately need an education. You have made a difference in so many different ways, not only here in the United States, but overseas as well. And that includes a cause close to my heart, "My Brother's Keeper," an initiative that we recently launched to make sure that more boys and young men of color can overcome the odds and achieve their dreams.

And we're joined by several faith leaders who are doing outstanding work in this area, mentoring and helping young men in tough neighborhoods. We're also joined by some of these young men who are working hard and trying to be good students and good sons and good citizens. And I want to say to each of those young men here, we're proud of you, and we expect a lot of you. And we're going to make sure that we're there for you so that you then in turn will be there for the next generation of young men.

And I mention all this because of all of our many partners for "My Brother's Keeper," it's clergy like you and your congregations that can play a special role to be that spiritual and ethical foundation, that rock, that so many young men need in their lives.

So I want to thank all of you who are already involved. I invite those who are not to get more information, see if you can join in this effort as brothers and sisters in Christ who "never tire of doing good."

And in closing, I'll just recall that old prayer that I think more than one preacher has invoked at the pulpit: "Lord, fill my mouth with worthwhile stuff, and nudge me when I've said enough." [*Laughter*] The Almighty is nudging me. I thank you for joining us this morning of prayer. I wish you all a blessed Holy Week and Easter, and I'd like to invite my friend Joel Hunter to deliver the opening prayer. Come on up, Joel.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:27 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Frazier Glenn Miller, Jr., suspected gunman in the April 13 shooting at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City in Overland Park, KS; William L. Corporon and his grandson Reat G. Underwood, who were killed in the shooting; Adam Hamilton, founding pastor, United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS; and Joel C. Hunter, senior pastor, Northland, A Church Distributed, in Longwood, FL.

Statement on the Observance of Passover
April 14, 2014

Michelle and I send our warmest greetings to all those celebrating Passover in the United States, in Israel, and around the world.

On Tuesday, just as we have every year of my Presidency, my family will join the millions taking part in the ancient tradition of the Seder. We will enjoy the company of friends and loved ones, retell a timeless story, and give thanks for the freedom we are so blessed to enjoy.

Yet, even as we celebrate, our prayers will be with the people of Overland Park, Kansas, and the family and friends of the three innocent people who were killed when a gunman, just 1 day before Passover, opened fire at a Jewish community center and retirement home on Sunday. As Americans, we will continue to stand united against this kind of terrible violence, which has no place in our society. We will continue to come together across faiths to combat the ignorance and intolerance, including anti-Semitism, that can lead to hatred and violence. And we will never lose faith that compassion and justice will ultimately triumph over hate and fear.

For that is one of the great lessons of the Exodus. The tale of the Hebrew slaves and their flight from Egypt carries the hope and promise that the Jewish people have held in their hearts for thousands of years, and it is has inspired countless generations in their own struggles for freedom around the globe.

In America, the Passover story has always had special meaning. We come from different places and diverse backgrounds, but we are bound together by a journey from bondage to liberty enshrined in our founding documents and continued in each generation. As we were so painfully reminded on Sunday, our world is still in need of repair, but the story of the Exodus teaches us that with patience, determination, and abundant faith, a brighter future is possible. *Chag Sameach.*

NOTE: The statement referred to William L. Corporon, Reat G. Underwood, and Terri LaManno, who were killed in the April 13 shootings at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and the Village Shalom assisted living center in Overland Park, KS; and Frazier Glenn Miller, Jr., the suspected gunman.

Statement on the First Anniversary of the Boston Marathon Bombing
April 15, 2014

A year ago, tragedy struck at the 117th Boston Marathon. Four innocent people were killed that week, and hundreds more were wounded. Today we remember Krystle Campbell, Lingzi Lu, Martin Richard, and Sean Collier. And we send our thoughts and prayers to those still struggling to recover.

We also know that the most vivid images from that day were not of smoke and chaos, but of compassion, kindness, and strength: a man in a cowboy hat helping a wounded stranger out of harm's way, runners embracing loved ones and each other, an EMT carrying a spectator to safety. Today we recognize the incredible courage and leadership of so many

Bostonians in the wake of unspeakable tragedy. And we offer our deepest gratitude to the courageous firefighters, police officers, medical professionals, runners, and spectators who, in an instant, displayed the spirit Boston was built on: perseverance, freedom, and love.

One year later, we also stand in awe of the men and women who continue to inspire us: learning to stand, walk, dance, and run again. With each new step our country is moved by the resilience of a community and a city. And when the sun rises over Boylston Street next Monday, Patriot's Day, hundreds of thousands will come together to show the world the meaning of "Boston Strong," as a city chooses to run again.

NOTE: The statement referred to Carlos Arredondo, a spectator at the 2013 Boston Marathon who assisted Jeff Bauman, Jr., who was wounded in the bombing.

Remarks at the Community College of Allegheny County North Campus in North Fayette Township, Pennsylvania
April 16, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody!

Audience members. Hello!

The President. Hello, Allegheny County! Joe and I decided it was time for a guys' trip. [*Laughter*] Actually, Michelle and Jill wanted us out the house. [*Laughter*] They said—so we decided to take a little road trip. And we are thrilled to be back here with a lot of good friends and folks who are doing terrific work every single day.

We brought with us some people who are doing some important work, trying to make sure that we're building on the kind of success that we're seeing here. First of all, Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker is here. Give Penny a big round of applause. We've got a great friend and an outstanding Senator, Bob Casey, in the house. Congressman Mike Doyle is here. One of the biggest Steelers fans we've got. [*Laughter*] We've got County Executive Rich Fitzgerald here in the house. Outstanding mayor of Pittsburgh, Bill Peduto is here. And your college president, Quintin Bullock, is here. [*Applause*] Hey!

And of course, all of you are here. [*Applause*] Yeah! Yeah! [*Laughter*] Now, we're here because CCAC is an outstanding model of the kind of job-driven training we're trying to encourage all across the country. And Joe and I just spent some time checking out the machines and motors that are being used here to train folks in mechatronics. Now, I have to say that before I came here, I didn't know there was such a thing as mechatronics. [*Laughter*] Sounds like something that Godzilla would be fighting. [*Laughter*] It turns out, it has to do with engineering, how stuff works. And we saw firsthand everything that you are doing to train more workers for new jobs and better jobs, jobs companies need to keep growing.

And what we want to do is, we want to replicate your model across the country. You're doing something right that is making a difference in people's lives, and we want to spread the word. So that's why we're here today in Allegheny County, because I'm taking some new action to expand this kind of job-driven training to all 50 States.

And Joe talked a little bit about why we have to do this, because in today's economy, it's never been more important to make sure that our folks are trained for the jobs that are there and for the jobs of the future.

Now, we've spent the past 5½ years fighting back from the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes. The good news is, our economy is growing again, our businesses are creating jobs. We've created nearly 9 million jobs over the past 4 years. We've cut our deficits by more than half. Our manufacturing sector that used to be losing jobs, just hemorrhaging jobs, is now adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. [*Applause*] First time since the 1990s. High school dropout rates are going down. College attendance rates and graduation rates

are going up. Our troops are coming home. We're seeing an energy boom all across the country. And more than 7½ million people have been able to sign up for health care, many for the very first time, through the Affordable Care Act. And 7½ million people, by the way, is about the number that it would take to fill up Heinz Field 115 times.

So there are a lot of good trends that are taking place. And a lot of that has to do with the great work that our outstanding Vice President is doing. It has to do with the great work that folks like Mike and Bob and Rich are doing, and your outstanding mayor that's—in Pittsburgh and all he's doing to help transform the economy there.

But here's the challenge, and a lot of folks here know it: A lot of people don't feel that progress in their own lives yet. So the stock market is doing great. Corporate profits are soaring. Folks at the very, very top are doing better than ever. But too many Americans, if they're lucky enough to have a job, are working harder and harder just to get by, much alone—much less to get ahead. For too many middle class Americans, it feels as if the same trends that have been going on for decades are continuing. Right? You're working hard, but wages flatline, incomes flatline, cost of everything else going up.

So we've got to reverse those trends. We've got to make sure that we have an economy that's not just growing from the top down, because it doesn't really grow when it's just from the top down. We've got to have an economy where it grows from the middle class out and from the bottom up and everybody has a chance.

That's the idea of America: If you work hard, you can get ahead. That's the promise at the heart of this country. If you're responsible, you're willing to put in some sweat, you can get ahead. You may not be fabulously wealthy, but you can support a family, you can buy a home, make sure your kids are doing good and they can go to college, have something left over for retirement, have health care you can count on, maybe take a vacation once in a while—[*laughter*]—right? Just the basics and knowing that you're part of a community that is growing for everybody, not just some.

Restoring that idea is the defining issue of our time. And so the truth is—Joe and I, we were talking about this the other day. We sometimes sound like a broken record because we've been talking about this for 6, 7, 8 years, ever since we've been in public office. But it's more urgent than ever now that we move forward. And we know what to do.

We're pushing a four-part opportunity agenda. And the first part is more good jobs paying good wages: manufacturing jobs, construction jobs, jobs in energy, jobs in innovation, jobs in infrastructure, rebuilding our roads and our bridges, putting people back to work. There's a lot more we could be doing.

Number two, we've got to train more Americans with the skills to fill the jobs that are there, just like you do here at CCAC. Number three, we've got to guarantee every young American a world-class education. And number four, when people do have a job, we've got to make sure that job pays a decent wage and that you have savings you can retire on and health care you can count on.

Now, these are the things we've got to be doing. You know it, I know it. That's what would put our unemployment rate down faster. It would pull our wages up faster. It's what we could do to create more jobs and economic security for a lot of families that have been reaching for it for years. And every single person you send to Washington should be focused on that issue. That's what America needs right now.

Now, today the reason we came here is to focus on that second part of that agenda: training Americans with the skills that they need for the good jobs that are going to be here today and tomorrow. Around here, you know better than most how in recent decades, the economy hasn't always worked for middle class families. You saw outsourcing. You—there was a time when finding a good job in manufacturing wasn't all that hard. If you were willing to work, you could go to the local factory—maybe the factory your dad was working in—and say, I'm ready to go, and they'd sign you up.

And over time, the economy changed, part of it because of globalization, some of it because of new technologies. And you've seen, sometimes painfully, where technology shutters factories and ships jobs overseas and even makes some jobs obsolete.

But you know what? We're not going to reverse all those trends. We can't stop technology. And you've got a global economy now where we've got to compete. We live in a 21st-century global economy. Jobs know no borders, and companies are able to seek out the best educated, most highly skilled workers wherever they live. And that's where the good jobs and the good pay and the good benefits is going to be.

Other countries know this. Countries like Germany, China, they are—India, they're working every day to outeducate our kids so they can outcompete our businesses. And each year, frankly, it shows that they're making more progress than we are. We're still ahead, we've still got the best cards, but they're making some good decisions. We've got to make those same decisions.

And when it comes to training our workers, not all of today's good jobs require a 4-year college degree, but I promise you, there's not a job out there that's going to pay a lot if you don't have some sort of specialized training. So our best bet is keeping ahead in the skills race.

And you see what happens when we put effort into making sure workers have new skills, the education that's required for this 21st-century economy. At a time when traditional manufacturing is back on the rise, Pittsburgh is seeing new factories manufacturing new technologies across the board. And I know you're county executive and your mayor and our steel workers, everybody is—we're focused on bringing jobs back. And the good news is they're coming back. The problem is, we're having trouble filling some of those jobs.

I mean, there's been great progress in this area. You've earned a great nickname—Roboburgh—because you've got high-tech plants and workplaces that are adding jobs faster than workers can fill them. That's a good problem to have. But we've got a lot of Americans who are still looking for work or underemployed and not getting paid enough. That's where what you do here is making a difference.

America has got a choice to make. We can do nothing, which is the strategy that some folks in Washington seem to have, or we can do what we've always done best: We pull together, we fight back, and we win. That's what we do best.

So earlier this year, I asked Joe to work with Penny Pritzker and Tom Perez, our Labor Secretary, to lead an across-the-board reform of all of our Federal training programs to make sure they've got one clear mission: Train Americans with the skills employers need. Not something that looks good on paper, but doesn't give you a job. Find out what are the jobs that need to be filled, and make sure folks are being trained and matched to those good jobs.

We've got to move away from what our Labor Secretary, Tom Perez, calls a "train and pray" approach. We train them and we pray that they can get a job. [*Laughter*] Because the problem there is students, when they go to a community college, they go to a 4-year university, they're taking out debt. They're straining their budgets. We've got to make sure that it pays off for them. So we need to take a job-driven approach. And that's what you've done here in Allegheny County. That's what you're doing here.

So we're rewarding high schools that redesign their curriculums to help students gain ready-to-work skills even earlier because there's no reason why you got to wait for college. Our high schools could be providing more relevant education and making kids more job ready.

We are supporting partnerships between employers and local governments and nonprofits to help unemployed workers who have been sidelined for too long, help them get the skills that they need, help to connect them to the jobs that require those skills. We're working with a bipartisan coalition of Governors and mayors across the country to make job training partnerships a reality for more Americans.

But we could be doing a lot more. And I've asked Congress to invest in serious programs

that connect ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs. That's—[*applause*]. And in fairness, Mike Doyle, he's supportive of that and Bob Casey is supportive of it. But unfortunately, there are some other folks in Washington that haven't acted yet. They haven't been getting the job done so far. And Americans can't afford to wait.

So today I'm taking two significant actions that don't require Congress—[*applause*]—that don't require Congress. First, we've asked more community colleges to do what you've done here at Allegheny, and that is to figure out what skills local employers are looking for, and then partner with them to help design the curriculums and to prepare the students for those jobs. We want a seamless progression from community college programs to industry-recognized credentials and credit towards a college degree.

And today I'm announcing that we're going to award nearly $500 million to those institutions who are doing it best in all 50 States, using existing money to create opportunity for hard-working folks like you. [*Applause*] That's good.

Second—and this is related—we're launching a $100 million competition for what we're calling American Apprenticeship Grants. Now, these are awards that are going to expand the kinds of apprenticeships that help young people and experienced workers get on a path for—towards advancement, towards better jobs, better pay, a trajectory upwards in their careers.

And apprenticeships are a way to link more Americans to jobs in some of our in-demand fields, like IT and health care. They let you earn while you learn. And sometimes, it makes—it's possible for them to also create college credits on the job, even as you're pursuing a degree or a better job.

Right now nearly 9 out of 10 apprenticeships—folks who are in apprenticeships, they get hired when they're finished, which makes sense, right? You get an apprenticeship; you're there, you're learning on the job. People see that you're serious about working. So 9 out of 10 folks, once they get an apprenticeship, they get hired. And by the way, they make an average of $50,000.

So we're streamlining efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor to help veterans access their GI bill benefits for apprenticeships. Businesses, unions, community colleges, nonprofits—we're getting them to work with us as well. The UAW is joining with the Big Three and John Deere and others to add nearly 2,000 apprentices. Some of the biggest manufacturers are partnering with community colleges in North Carolina and Texas and California on high-skill training programs.

And now we want to work with national industry associations to help partnerships like these take root all across the country so that anybody, in any city, any State, can earn the training they need to get the good jobs of tomorrow. So the bottom line is, if you're willing to put in the work to get a job or earn a promotion in today's economy, America's job-training system should give you every possible chance.

And you're doing it here. When we took that tour, we saw young people and some not-so-young people—I won't say who. I don't want to offend—[*laughter*]—but these are folks who, many of them were in a job right now, but they saw that it was a dead end, and they wanted to make sure that they could get a better job. Some of them were just getting started. But either way, their investment and their effort was being rewarded.

One person we met is a gentleman named Tim Wright. He was showing us some of the computer systems that folks are working on. Now, Tim worked as a shift laborer for 13 years, loading rail cars, moving equipment, working nights, working weekends. And he always had his eye on moving into industrial maintenance so he could repair and oversee the factory's equipment, but he couldn't pass the skills test. But he—I love this about Tim. He did not give up. He didn't say, well, I guess I can't get to my dream. Instead, he started on this mechatronics training at CCAC.

So he'd squeeze in classes whenever he could, while he was still working his shifts. And after 6 months of hard work, he graduated as

an industry-certified mechatronics technician. He retook the test. He passed the test. Today, Tim is doing what he set out to do. So today, he's working on a factory floor, making sure the machines do what they're supposed to do. He earns more money; he works better hours. He has more time to spend with his family.

And I want to read what Tim said here about this. He said: "That extra training made all the difference in the world. Those were the skills I needed to get to the next level."

So I couldn't be prouder of Tim. Those are the victories. They don't get a lot of publicity. Tim's name won't be in the papers—although, now it may be because I just talked about him. [*Laughter*] But that's what America is all about, each of us working to try to move forward. And by each of us moving forward, we all move forward. And then, we reach back, and we help other folks.

Companies that are represented here today, like Alle-Kiski and Schroeder and Aerotech, they're helping. They want to help even more of their workers to take their skills to the next level, whether it's through a community college partnership like Tim's or working with organizations like New Century Careers here in southwestern Pennsylvania. [*Applause*] Yeah! More workers getting apprenticeships. We know it works. And if it worked for folks like Tim and some of the men and women who are standing behind me here today, who took the initiative to upgrade their skills and stay ahead of the jobs curve and prepare themselves for a new job or a better job, then it can work all the way—all across the country.

We want that for every American. Everybody who works hard and takes responsibility deserves a chance to get ahead. That is what this country is built on. That's what the moment requires. That's what Congress should be working on. That's what Joe is working on. That's what I'm working on. That's what you're working on. And if we keep on working, we're going to move forward.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:05 p.m. at the West Hills Center. In his remarks, he referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; and Tim Wright, shift mechanic, Eastman Chemical Company, Jefferson Site. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden, who introduced the President.

Statement on Immigration Reform Legislation
April 16, 2014

One year ago, the Senate introduced comprehensive bipartisan legislation to fix our broken immigration system. Both sides worked together to pass that bill with a strong bipartisan vote. The Senate's commonsense agreement would grow the economy by $1.4 trillion and shrink the deficit by nearly $850 billion over the next two decades, while providing a tough, but fair pathway to earned citizenship to bring 11 million undocumented individuals out of the shadows, modernizing our legal immigration system, continuing to strengthen border security, and holding employers accountable. Simply put, it would boost our economy, strengthen our security, and live up to our most closely held values as a society.

Unfortunately, Republicans in the House of Representatives have repeatedly failed to take action, seemingly preferring the status quo of a broken immigration system over meaningful reform. Instead of advancing commonsense reform and working to fix our immigration system, House Republicans have voted in favor of extreme measures like a punitive amendment to strip protections from DREAMers. The majority of Americans are ahead of House Republicans on this crucial issue, and there is broad support for reform, including among Democrats and Republicans, labor and business, and faith and law enforcement leaders. We have a chance to strengthen our country while upholding our traditions as a nation of laws and a

nation of immigrants, and I urge House Republicans to listen to the will of the American people and bring immigration reform to the House floor for a vote.

Remarks at the Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride Opening Ceremony
April 17, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Welcome to the White House. Thank you to Ric for not just a nice introduction, but more importantly, for your outstanding service to our country and for your service to our veterans and fellow wounded warriors.

Now, I also want to mention that our Vice President here has been relentless in his support, along with our spouses, Michelle and Jill Biden, for military families. And we're very proud of everything that Joe has done.

This is now the fifth time that I've had the honor of welcoming the Soldier Ride to the White House. And I have to tell you, this is one of my favorite events of the year. First of all, you know it's spring when—or at least it's supposed to be spring—[*laughter*]—when the Soldier Ride comes around. But mainly, it's because those who participate are such an incredible inspiration to me and to our country.

To all the riders, you look outstanding, especially after biking 17 miles yesterday. You're doing another 17 miles tomorrow, another 17 miles after that—all told, nearly 60 miles. Today we wanted to come cheer you on. And I think we've got some folks from the Army here, is that right?

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. And the Navy.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Air Force.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Marines.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Oh, that was good. [*Laughter*] Coast Guard.

Audience members. [*Applause*].

The President. And we've got some extraordinary families here today. Yay, families.

By now, everybody knows the story about how this got started. You had a bartender on Long Island, Chris Carney, who came up with the idea of riding his bike across America to support wounded warriors. Chris couldn't be here today. He owns a gym now. I think you all inspired him to trade the bar in for some barbells. But today there are Soldier Rides all across the country, and we want to thank everybody at the Wounded Warriors Project for their incredible support.

I know some of you are doing this for the very first time; some of you have ridden three or four times. Some of you are riding in tandem with your parents. Biking nearly 60 miles in 3 days would be a challenge for anybody, but for all of you, this is a lot more than a bike ride, this is a mark of how far you've come.

Many of you are recovering from devastating injuries. Some of you have had to learn the basics all over again: how to stand again, how to walk again, how to run again. And now you're here today because that's what Soldier's Ride is all about: seeing each other through the finish line.

Lieutenant Commander John Jae Terry is here. Three years ago, he was on foot patrol in Afghanistan when he was hit by an IED, ended up losing his leg. But reflecting on his service, he said he would do it all again. Now he's got a new goal: get in the best shape possible so he can play with his three kids. And so today he's here on his first Soldier Ride.

You've got Master Sergeant Louis Alfonso Ramirez. Serving in Afghanistan, he lost good friends in a terrible ambush. He even assisted at the airport as they began their dignified transfer home. Later diagnosed with posttraumatic stress, credits the Wounded Warriors Project with helping him heal. He says, "You know that they've got you." This is now his fourth ride.

Sergeant Major Sedrick Banks is here. An explosion in Iraq left him with injuries to his neck and his back and traumatic brain injury. But after years of rehab, Sedrick is focused on the future. He volunteers here in Washington,

helps mentor young men with the life skills they need to succeed. He calls himself now a "warrior for society." This is his first Soldier Ride.

Major Jeanette Nieves-Ayala is here. And I first met Jeanette a few years ago at Walter Reed, where she was recovering from an injury received in Iraq. As some of you know, when I visit with our troops, I often hand out coins marked with the Seal of the President. Jeanette shook my hand, and she said: "Mr. President, all these men think your coin is the best; I don't. I made a bet with them that there was a coin that could trump yours." I said, "What are you talking about?" She said, "I want the First Lady's coin." [*Laughter*] "The First Lady's coin would beat yours."

Now, it is true that the First Lady trumps me. But Jeanette says her proudest accomplishment is being a peer mentor to other wounded warriors. She says that during her recovery: "I was definitely being carried. Now I feel like I am helping to carry others." So I want to thank you, Jeanette.

This ride is first and foremost for these incredible riders. But it's men and women like John and Louis and Sedrick and Jeanette and all of you who make the ride so special for all of us, because you inspire us. You inspire the country, some of whom will be out cheering along your ride. You inspire me with your courage, your resolve, your resilience, your tenacity, your optimism. It makes me proud to be your Commander in Chief. And Michelle and I treasure every moment that we get to spend with you and your families.

Every day I have the honor of serving as this country's Commander in Chief. And as long as I have that honor, I will keep fighting to make sure you and your families get the care and treatment and benefits that you have earned and deserve. When people ask of you to serve your country, to give your all, to make your sacrifices, you've raised your hands. You've stepped up. You held up your end of the bargain. And it's especially now, as we're winding down the war in Afghanistan, after having ended over a decade of war, that we are standing up for you. Our obligations to our veterans endure for your entire lives. That's our mission. That's why we're here, not just during this ride, but all year long.

So with that, the sun is out. It's a spectacular day. The racers look like they're ready. I think it's time for us to get this party started.

God bless you. God bless America. Let's get this going.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:06 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

The President's News Conference
April 17, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Before I begin, I just want to express on behalf of the American people our deepest condolences to the Republic of Korea and the families of all those who have seen their loved ones lost when a ferry sank within the last couple of days.

Obviously, information is still coming in. We know that many of the victims of this terrible tragedy were students. And American Navy personnel and marines have already been on the scene helping with search and rescue. As one of our closest allies, our commitment to South Korea is unwavering in good times and in bad, and that's something I'll underscore during my visit to Seoul next week.

Before I take questions, I'd also like to say a few words about how the Affordable Care Act is now covering more people at less cost than most would have predicted just a few months ago.

The first open enrollment period under this law ended a little over 2 weeks ago. And as more data comes in, we now know that the number of Americans who've signed up for private insurance in the marketplaces has grown to 8 million people—8 million people. Thirty-five percent of people who enrolled

through the Federal marketplace are under the age of 35. All told, independent experts now estimate that millions of Americans who were uninsured have gained coverage this year, with millions more to come next year and the year after.

We've also seen signs that the Affordable Care Act is bringing economic security to more Americans. Before this law added new transparency and competition to the individual market, folks who have bought insurance on their own regularly saw double-digit increases in their premiums. That was the norm. And while we will suspect that premiums will keep rising, as they have for decades, we also know that since the law took effect health care spending has risen more slowly than at any time in the past 50 years.

In the decade before the Affordable Care Act, employer-based insurance rose almost 8 percent a year. Last year, it grew at half that rate. Under this law, real Medicare costs per person have nearly stopped growing. The life of the Medicare Trust Fund has been extended by 10 years. And the independent Congressional Budget Office now expects premiums for plans on the marketplace to be 15-percent lower than originally predicted.

So those savings add up to more money that families can spend at businesses, more money that businesses can spend hiring new workers. And the CBO now says that the Affordable Care Act will be cheaper than recently projected. Lower costs from coverage provisions will shrink our deficits by an extra hundred billion dollars.

So the bottom line is, under the Affordable Care Act, the share of Americans with insurance is up, the growth of health care costs is down. Hundreds of millions of Americans who already have insurance now have new benefits and protections, from free preventive care to freedom from lifetime caps on your care. No American with a preexisting condition like asthma or cancer can be denied coverage. No woman can be charged more just for being a woman. Those days are over. And this thing is working.

I've said before, this law won't solve all of the problems in our health care system. We know we've got more work to do. But we now know for a fact that repealing the Affordable Care Act would increase the deficit, raise premiums for millions of Americans, and take insurance away from millions more, which is why, as I've said before, I find it strange that the Republican position on this law is still stuck in the same place that it has always been.

They still can't bring themselves to admit that the Affordable Care Act is working. They said nobody would sign up; they were wrong about that. They said it would be unaffordable for the country; they were wrong about that. They were wrong to keep trying to repeal a law that is working when they have no alternative answer for millions of Americans with preexisting conditions who would be denied coverage again or every woman who would be charged more for just being a woman again.

Now, I know every American isn't going to agree with this law. But I think we can agree that it's well past time to move on as a country and refocus our energy on the issues that the American people are most concerned about, and that continues to be the economy. Because these endless, fruitless repeal efforts come at a cost. The 50 or so votes Republicans have taken to repeal this law could have been 50 votes to create jobs by investing in things like infrastructure or innovation. Or 50 votes to make it easier for middle class families to send their kids to college. Or 50 votes to raise the minimum wage or restore unemployment insurance that they let expire for folks working hard to find a new job.

The point is, the repeal debate is and should be over. The Affordable Care Act is working. And I know the American people don't want us spending the next 2½ years refighting the settled political battles of the last 5 years. They sent us here to repair our economy, to rebuild our middle class, and to restore our founding promise of opportunity, not just for a few, but for all. And as President, that's exactly what I intend to keep doing as long as I'm in this office.

With that, I'll take some questions. Let's see who we've got. Kathleen Hennessey of the L.A. Times.

Ukraine

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. I—it sounds like there's been some development on—in the Ukraine talks in Geneva. I'm just wondering if you could describe your level of confidence in what this agreement is and how you can be sure that Russia will follow through, given some of the remarks from President Putin this morning.

The President. I don't think we can be sure of anything at this point. I think there is the possibility, the prospect that diplomacy may deescalate the situation and we may be able to move towards what has always been our goal, which is let the Ukrainians make their own decisions about their own lives.

There was a meeting in Geneva—representatives of the Ukrainian Government, the Russian Government, the EU, as well as the United States. It was a lengthy, vigorous conversation. My understanding is, is that the Ukrainian Prime [Foreign]* Minister gave a detailed and thorough presentation about the reforms that they intend to introduce, including reforms that provide assurances for Ukrainians who live in eastern and southern Ukraine that they will be fully represented, that their rights will be protected, that Russian speakers and Russian natives in Ukraine will have the full protection of the law. And my understanding, based on what I've heard, is that there was an acknowledgement within the meeting that the Ukrainian Government in Kiev had gone out of its way to address a range of the concerns that may have existed in southern and eastern Ukraine.

There was a promising public statement that indicated the need to disarm all irregular forces and militias and groups that have been occupying buildings. There was an offer of amnesty to those who would willingly lay down their arms, evacuate those buildings so that law and order could be restored in eastern and southern Ukraine.

The Russians signed on to that statement. And the question now becomes, will, in fact, they use the influence that they've exerted in a disruptive way to restore some order so that Ukrainians can carry out an election, move forward with the decentralization reforms that they've proposed, stabilize their economy, and start getting back on the path of growth and democracy and that their sovereignty will be respected?

We're not going to know whether, in fact, there's followthrough on these statements for several days. And so today I spoke with Chancellor Merkel; later on in the day, I'm going to be speaking to David Cameron. We're going to be consulting with our European allies. Over the last week, we have put in place additional consequences that we can impose on the Russians if we do not see actual improvement of the situation on the ground. And we are coordinating now with our European allies.

My hope is that we actually do see followthrough over the next several days. But I don't think, given past performance, that we can count on that, and we have to be prepared to potentially respond to what continue to be efforts of interference by the Russians in eastern and southern Ukraine.

If in fact we do see improvements, then that will obviously be a positive. In the meantime, we're going to make sure that we continue to help the Ukrainian Government—working with the IMF, the Europeans, and others—to stabilize their economy and to start reforming it. We're going to continue to work with our NATO allies to make sure that they are assured that we're going to meet our article 5 obligations and that they are secure.

And as I've said before—I think I had an interview with Major yesterday in which I mentioned—this whole exercise by the Russians is not good for Russia either. There are, I think, a number of articles today indicating the degree to which an economy that was already stuck in

* White House correction.

the mud is further deteriorating because of these actions.

And in my conversations with President Putin, I've emphasized the same thing, that we have no desire to see further deterioration of the Russian economy. On the other hand, we are going to continue to uphold the basic principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity for all countries, and that there is a way for Ukraine to be independent, to be sovereign, and to have positive relationships with both the West and the East, with both its European neighbors and its Russian neighbors. And that's our primary concern.

Maria Peña, La Opinión.

House Republican Leader Eric I. Cantor/Immigration Reform Legislation

Q. Yes, thank you, Mr. President. I've got a hot spot for you here in the U.S. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor said—or claimed that you haven't learned how to work with them. And he's angry that you're attacking the GOP on the lack of movement on immigration reform. So I was wondering if—how you respond to that.

And the second part to that, right now you have hunger strikers across the street demanding relief for undocumented immigrants. And I was wondering if you can dispel the rumors or if there's a leak from the White House that you will make some sort of announcement in the coming weeks to expand that relief for the undocumented. Thank you.

The President. Well, I actually had a very pleasant conversation with the—Mr. Cantor yesterday.

Q. Really?

The President. I did. [*Laughter*] You're always kind of surprised by the mismatch between press releases and the conversation. I wished him happy Passover. And what I said to him privately is something that I would share with him—that I've said publicly, which is, there is bipartisan support for comprehensive immigration reform. It would strengthen our economy, it would help with our security, and it would provide relief to families who—many of whom have lived here for years and who have children and family members who are U.S. citizens; and that Congress should act; and that right now what's holding us back is House Republican leadership not willing to go ahead and let the process move forward.

So it was a pretty friendly conversation. I think in his press release, I gather he was referring to the observation that we had made a day earlier that it had now been a year since the Senate had passed a strong bipartisan bill and that although we had heard a lot of talk about the House Republicans being interested in doing something, nothing had happened yet, and suggesting that we need some urgency here. I still feel the same way.

I know there are Republicans in the House, as there are Republicans in the Senate, who know this is the right thing to do. I also know it's hard politics for Republicans because there are some in their base that are very opposed to this. But what I also know is that there are families all across the country who are experiencing great hardship and pain because this is not getting resolved. I also know that there are businesses around the country that could be growing even faster, that our deficits could be coming down faster, that we would have more customers in our shops, if we get this thing resolved.

We know what the right thing to do is. It's a matter of political will. It's not any longer a matter of policy. And I'm going to continue to encourage them to get this done.

As far as our actions, Jeh Johnson, our new head of the Department of Homeland Security, has been talking to everybody—law enforcement, immigrant rights groups—to do a thoroughgoing review of our approach towards enforcement. And we're doing that in consultation with Democrats and Republicans and with any interested party.

I do think that the system we have right now is broken. I'm not alone in that opinion. The only way to truly fix it is through congressional action. We have already tried to take as many administrative steps as we could. We're going to review it one more time to see if there's more that we can do to make it more consistent with common sense and more consistent

with, I think, the attitudes of the American people, which is we shouldn't be in the business, necessarily, of tearing families apart who otherwise are law abiding.

And so let me——

Q. Do you have a time?

The President. I won't get into timing right now because Mr. Johnson is going to go ahead and do that review.

Tamara Keith [NPR].

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Q. Yes. So you—regarding the Affordable Care Act, I think you——

The President. Yes, let's talk about that. [*Laughter*]

Q. Since you brought it up. [*Laughter*] I think everyone agrees that it has flaws. But Democrats have been sort of reluctant in Congress to reopen the conversation, and Republicans have been more than happy to reopen the conversation, but in a different way. Now that, as you say, it's here to stay, there are so many people that signed up, in this environment, is it possible to do the kind of corrections that the business community and many others would like to see, sort of, small, technical corrections?

The President. It is absolutely possible, but it will require a change in attitude on the part of the Republicans.

I have always said from the outset that on any large piece of legislation like this, there are going to be things that need to be improved, need to be tweaked. I said that, I think, the day I signed the bill. And I don't think there's been any hesitation on our part to consider ideas that would actually improve the legislation. The challenge we have is, is that if you have certain members in the Republican Party whose view is, making it work better is a concession to me, then it's hard in that environment to actually get it done.

And I recognize that their party is going through the stages of grief, right? [*Laughter*] Anger and denial and all that stuff—and we're not at acceptance yet. But at some point, my assumption is, is that there will be an interest to figure out how do we make this work in the best way possible.

We have 8 million people signed up through the exchanges. That doesn't include the 3 million young people who are able to stay on their parent's plan. It doesn't include the 3 million people who benefited from expansions to Medicaid. So if my math is correct, that's 14 million right there. You've got another 5 million people who signed up outside of the marketplaces, but are part of the same insurance pool. So we've got a sizable part of the U.S. population now that are—in the first—for the first time in many cases, in a position to enjoy the financial security of health insurance.

And I'm meeting them as I'm on the road. I met with—I saw a woman yesterday—young woman, maybe 34, with her mom and her dad, and she's got two small kids and self-employed husband and was diagnosed with breast cancer. And this isn't an abstraction to her. She is saving her home. She is saving her business. She is saving her parents' home, potentially, because she's got health insurance, which she just could not afford.

And the question now becomes, if, in fact, this is working for a lot of people, but there are still improvements to make, why are we still having a conversation about repealing the whole thing, and why are we having folks say that any efforts to improve it are somehow handing Obama a victory? This isn't about me. And my hope is, is that we start moving beyond that. My suspicion is, that probably will not happen until after November, because it seems as if this is the primary agenda item in the Republican political platform.

But here's what I know: The American people would much rather see us talk about jobs, would much rather see us talk about high college costs, would much rather see us discussing how we can rebuild our roads and our bridges and our infrastructure and put people back to work. They'd much rather see us talk about how we'd boost wages and boost incomes and improve their individual family bottom lines.

And if the Republicans want to spend the entire next 6 months or year talking about repealing a bill that provides millions of people health insurance without providing any meaningful alternative, instead of wanting to talk

about jobs and the economic situation of families all across the country, that's their prerogative. At some point, I think they'll make the transition. That's my hope anyway. If not, we're just going to keep on doing what we're doing, which is making it work for people all across the country.

I'm sorry, I'm going to say one last thing about this—[*laughter*]—just because this does frustrate me: States that have chosen not to expand Medicaid for no other reason than political spite. You've got 5 million people who could be having health insurance right now at no cost to these States—zero cost to these States—other than ideological reasons. They have chosen not to provide health insurance for their citizens. That's wrong. It should stop. Those folks should be able to get health insurance like everybody else.

Isaac [Edward-Isaac Dovere, Politico], from Politico. Where are you, Isaac? There you are.

Ukraine/Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act/2014 Congressional Elections

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Given all that you were just saying about the Affordable Care Act, do you think it's time for Democrats to start campaigning loudly and positively on the benefits of Obamacare? Will you lead that charge?

And on Ukraine, you've said in other situations—Iran, for example—that the military option remains on the table even as talks go on. Is the military option on the table with Russia? And if so, would that be through NATO forces, through lethal aid to Ukraine?

The President. Now, keep in mind, I think I've been very clear that military options are not on the table in Ukraine, because this is not a situation that would be amenable to a clear military solution. What we have to do is to create an environment in which irregular forces disarm, that the seizing of buildings cease, that a national dialogue by Ukrainians—not by Russians, not by Americans, or anybody else, but by Ukrainians—takes place. They move forward with reforms that meet the interests of the various groups within Ukraine, they move forward with elections, and they start getting their economic house in order. That's what's going to solve the problem.

And so, obviously, Russia right now still has its forces amassed along the Ukrainian-Russian border as a gesture of intimidation. And it is our belief, and not ours alone, but I think broad portions of the international community believe that Russia's hand is in the disruptions and chaos that we've been seeing in southern and eastern Ukraine. But there is an opportunity for Russia to take a different approach. We are encouraging them to do so.

In the meantime, we're going to prepare additional responses should Russia fail to take a different course. We've already had an impact on their economy that is well documented. It could get significantly worse. But we don't have an interest in hurting ordinary Russians just for the sake of it. Our strong preference would be for Mr. Putin to follow through on what is a glimmer of hope coming out of these Geneva talks. But we'll—we're not going to count on it until we see it. And in the meantime, we're going to prepare what our other options are.

With respect to the Affordable Care Act, my point is that we've been having a political fight about this for 5 years. We need to move on to something else. That's what the American people are interested in. I think that Democrats should forcefully defend and be proud of the fact that millions of people, like the woman I just described who I saw in Pennsylvania yesterday, we're helping because of something we did. I don't think we should apologize for it, and I don't think we should be defensive about it. I think there is a strong, good, right story to tell.

I think what the other side is doing and what the other side is offering would strip away protections from those families and from hundreds of millions of people who already had health insurance before the law passed, but never knew if the insurance company could drop them when they actually needed it, or women who were getting charged more just because they were a woman. I'm still puzzled why they've made this their sole agenda item when it comes to our politics. It's curious.

But it—what I intend to talk about is what the American people are interested in hearing: our plans for putting people back to work; our plans for making sure our economy continues to innovate; our plans to make sure that, as I discussed yesterday, we're training people for the jobs that are out there right now and making better use of our community colleges and linking them up with businesses; and how we're going to continue to bring manufacturing back the way we have over the last several years; and how we're going to put more money in the pockets of ordinary people.

So if they want to—if Republicans want to spend all their time talking about repealing a law that's working, that's their business. I think what Democrats should do is not be defensive, but we need to move on and focus on other things that are really important to the American people right now.

David Jackson [USA Today].

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act/Infrastructure/Job Creation Efforts

Q. Yes, sir. Thank you. One reason the Republicans talk about it is, there are people who object to the law who said they've had problems with the law, and there are a significant number of opponents of the law. I guess my question is, what makes you think a significant majority of the American people, of voters, will accept this law? Or are we destined to see health care as a 50/50, red State/blue State argument for years to come?

The President. Well, I think you're mixing up two things here, David. You said there are people who have seen problems with the law. That's not 50 percent of the American people. Right? There may have been folks who have been affected in ways that they weren't happy about by the law. That is a fall—far smaller number than the millions of people who've been signed up. That doesn't mean we shouldn't be concerned about it. That's an area where, as I said to Tamara, we should be open to, are there ways that we can make it even better? So that's objective facts and real problems out there.

The other side of it is just polling, right, what's the general opinion of the law, which is attached to general opinions about me or about Democrats and partisanship in the country generally.

My view is that the longer we see the law benefiting millions of people, the more we see accusations that the law is hurting millions of people being completely debunked, as some of you in the press have done, and the more the average American who already has health insurance sees that it's actually not affecting them in an adverse way, then it becomes less of a political football, which is where I want it to be. This shouldn't be a political football. This should be something that we take for granted, that in this country, you should be able to get affordable health care regardless of how wealthy you are.

Now, the larger issue about whether we can move past the polarization and, sort of, the bitter political debates between Democrats and Republicans, of which Obamacare is just one small part, that's going to take more time. But it's not for lack of trying on my part. And I think that I speak for all Democrats in saying, we would much prefer a constructive conversation with the Republicans about how do we get some stuff done, and let's focus on some areas that the American people really care about.

On jobs, we know that infrastructure would put people back to work right now and it would improve our economy for the long term. It didn't used to be a partisan issue. Why aren't we coming up with a way to make sure that we're rebuilding our roads and our bridges and improving our air traffic control system? There's no reason that has to be political. There really isn't any ideological disagreement on that. And I guarantee you after this winter, if you look at the potholes that are the size of canyons all across big chunks of the United States, that people would like to see an infrastructure bill. Well, let's get it done.

Q. How long before health care ceases to become a political football, do you think? Are we talking years? Months?

The President. I think it's hard to say. It's interesting, I spoke at the LBJ Library the other

day, and most of us weren't around to pay real close attention to those debates, or they're pretty distant now in the past. Apparently, it took several years before people realized, hey, Medicare actually works, and it's lifting a lot of seniors out of despair and poverty.

So we've been through this cycle before. It happens each and every time we make some strides in terms of strengthening our commitments to each other and we expand some of these social insurance programs.

There's a lot of fearmongering and a lot of political argument and debate, and a lot of accusations are flung back and forth about socialized medicine and the end of freedom. And then it turns out that, you know what, it's working for a lot of folks, and we still live in a free-market society, and the Constitution is intact. And then we move on. And I don't know how long it's going to take. But in the meantime, how about us focusing on some things that the American people really care about? All right?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:40 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Andriy Deshchytsya of Ukraine; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Major Garrett, chief White House correspondent, CBS News; and Pittsburgh, PA, resident Kimberly Francis, and her parents Judith and Michael Sparlin.

Statement on the Sinking of the South Korean Ferry *Sewol*
April 17, 2014

On behalf of all the American people, Michelle and I send our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims of the tragic ferry sinking off the coast of the Republic of Korea. The bonds of friendship between the American and Korean people are strong and enduring, and our hearts ache to see our Korean friends going through such a terrible loss, especially the loss of so many young students. South Korea is one of our closest allies, and American Navy personnel and U.S. marines are already on the scene assisting with the search and rescue efforts. I've directed our military to provide any and all assistance requested by our Korean partners in the days ahead. As I will underscore on my visit to Seoul next week, America's commitment to our ally South Korea is unwavering, in good times and in bad. As the Korean people deal with this heartbreaking tragedy, they will have the unending support and friendship of the United States.

Statement on the Death of Gabriel García Márquez
April 17, 2014

With the passing of Gabriel García Márquez, the world has lost one of its greatest visionary writers and one of my favorites from the time I was young. Affectionately known as Gabo to millions of his fans, he first won international recognition with his masterpiece "One Hundred Years of Solitude." I once had the privilege to meet him in Mexico, where he presented me with an inscribed copy that I cherish to this day. As a proud Colombian, a representative and voice for the people of the Americas, and as a master of the magic realism genre, he has inspired so many others, sometimes even to pick up the pen themselves. I offer my thoughts to his family and friends, whom I hope take solace in the fact that Gabo's work will live on for generations to come.

Remarks on Presenting the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the United States Naval Academy Midshipmen
April 18, 2014

The President. All right. Everybody, please have a seat, have a seat. Welcome to the White House. Congratulations to the Navy Midshipmen. Does this get old?

Audience member. Never.

The President. No? Okay. [*Laughter*] It's good to see Coach Ken again. And I want to recognize Vice Admiral Mike Miller for his service to the Academy and to our country.

This is the second time these seniors have come here to claim the Commander in Chief's Trophy. If you guys have your punchcards with you, the next one is free. [*Laughter*] I'm pretty sure Coach Ken would agree that this was one of the best teams yet.

First of all, you had incredible talent. Senior captain Cody Peterson and D.J. Sargenti led the defense. I hear that they're known in the locker room as the Meatheads. [*Laughter*] On a football team, though, that's high praise.

This year, quarterback Keenan Reynolds had one of the best seasons in school history. His 31 rushing touchdowns weren't just an Academy record, they were a Division I record for a quarterback. He is one of only a handful of players in Division I history to rush for 30 or more touchdowns in a single season. I think it's fair to say that if you're on a list with Barry Sanders you're doing pretty good.

So this team had the leadership, it had the tools. But this is a team that also had a knack for getting the job done under some pretty tough circumstances. When the Government was forced to shut down, you didn't even know if the game against Air Force was going to happen. Luckily, the Secretary of Defense stepped in, gave the green light, which tells you how important it was, because Secretary Hagel has a few things on his plate, but he personally intervened on this one.

A few weeks later, you beat San Jose State in triple overtime, with Keenan scoring seven rushing touchdowns, the most ever by a Division I quarterback in a single game. And you kept on rolling through the games that really mattered. In the snow, you beat Army for the 12th time in a row—they're starting to feel bad about this—[*laughter*]—locking up the Commander in Chief's Trophy for the ninth time in 11 years. You went on to beat Middle Tennessee State to win your first bowl game since 2009.

So, overall, this was a pretty good year on the gridiron. What's more impressive is the fact that for these outstanding young men, football isn't even the main thing. When these guys sign up—when you sign up to play at Annapolis—you know you're in for a different experience. A typical day starts at 6 a.m. in the training room. Breakfast is at 7. After that, it's class, lunch, and football meetings. Then more class, football practice, dinner. Free time starts at 8, which most players use to study until midnight. And when students at other colleges are enjoying summer vacation, these guys are busy with military training and summer school and offseason workouts.

So yes, it's about learning to be a good football player, but more importantly, it's about learning how to be a good leader and to be a good man. And that's what these outstanding Americans are and will continue to be.

Next month, 14 of these guys are going to be commissioned as ensigns in the Navy. Another eight will become 2d lieutenants in the Marine Corps. Senior captain Matt Aiken will serve on a ship down in Norfolk. And Wave Ryder—by the way, if your name is Wave Ryder, then you've got to be in the Navy—[*laughter*]—will suit up as a naval aviator.

That's their commitment to service. That's a commitment to country and to each other that sets this team apart.

And today, that commitment is as strong as ever. Last month, I know that all of us were mourning the loss of Will McKamey. Two busloads of classmates and teammates made the 8-hour trip to Knoxville to attend his funeral, as did Coach Ken. I understand your motto for this season is "I Will" in memory of him. And

that's what camaraderie is all about: honor, courage, commitment. That's what makes the Midshipmen so strong. And that's why I'm so proud to serve as your Commander in Chief, not only—in fact, not primarily—because of what you've done on the football field, but because of your dedication to each other and your service to America.

So today it is my privilege to present you with a trophy that weighs about as much as I do. [*Laughter*] Congratulations, guys, once again.

[*At this point, Head Coach Ken Niumatalolo gave brief remarks, after which the President was presented with a team jersey and commemorative ring.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Cody Peterson and D.J. Sargenti, linebackers, Matt Aiken, wide receiver, and Wave Ryder, safety, U.S. Naval Academy football team; Barry D. Sanders, former running back, National Football League's Detroit Lions; and Will McKamey, a Midshipmen running back who died on March 25 after collapsing at football practice the previous weekend.

Statement on Signing Legislation Concerning Visa Limitations for Certain Representatives to the United Nations
April 18, 2014

Today I have signed into law S. 2195, an Act concerning visa limitations for certain representatives to the United Nations. S. 2195 amends section 407 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991, to provide that no individual may be admitted to the United States as a representative to the United Nations, if that individual has been found to have been engaged in espionage or terrorist activity directed against the United States or its allies, and if that individual may pose a threat to United States national security interests. As President Bush observed in signing the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991, this provision "could constrain the exercise of my exclusive constitutional authority to receive within the United States certain foreign ambassadors to the United Nations." (Public Papers of the President, George Bush, Vol. I, 1990, page 240). Acts of espionage and terrorism against the United States and our allies are unquestionably problems of the utmost gravity, and I share the Congress's concern that individuals who have engaged in such activity may use the cover of diplomacy to gain access to our Nation. Nevertheless, as President Bush also observed, "curtailing by statute my constitutional discretion to receive or reject ambassadors is neither a permissible nor a practical solution." I shall therefore continue to treat section 407, as originally enacted and as amended by S. 2195, as advisory in circumstances in which it would interfere with the exercise of this discretion.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
April 18, 2014.

NOTE: S. 2195, approved April 18, was assigned Public Law No. 113–100.

Statement on the Observance of Easter
April 18, 2014

This weekend, Michelle and I join our fellow Christians in marking Good Friday and celebrating Easter. We will reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for us and rejoice in the triumph of the Resurrection. This season reminds us that God is always with us, in

suffering and in celebration. We give thanks for the many blessings in our lives and renew our commitments to follow Christ's example by loving God and loving our neighbors as ourselves. We wish all who celebrate a blessed Easter.

The President's Weekly Address
April 19, 2014

Hi, everybody. For millions of Americans, this time of year holds great meaning.

Earlier this week, we hosted a Passover Seder at the White House and joined Jewish families around the world in their retellings of the story of the Exodus and the victory of faith over oppression.

And this Sunday, Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and I will join our fellow Christians around the world in celebrating the resurrection of Christ, the salvation he offered the world, and the hope that comes with the Easter season.

These holy days have their roots in miracles that took place long ago. And yet they still inspire us, guide us, and strengthen us today. They remind us of our responsibilities to God and, as God's children, our responsibilities to one another.

For me and for countless other Christians, Holy Week, and Easter are times for reflection and renewal. We remember the grace of an awesome God, who loves us so deeply that He gave us his only Son so that we might live through Him. We recall all that Jesus endured for us—the scorn of the crowds, the agony of the cross—all so that we might be forgiven our sins and granted everlasting life. And we recommit ourselves to following His example, to love and serve one another, particularly "the least of these" among us, just as He loves every one of us.

The common thread of humanity that connects us all—not just Christians and Jews, but Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs—is our shared commitment to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. To remember, I am my brother's keeper, and I am my sister's keeper. Whatever your faith, believer or nonbeliever, there's no better time to rededicate ourselves to that universal mission.

For me, Easter is a story of hope, a belief in a better day to come, just around the bend. So to all Christians who are celebrating, from my family to yours, happy Easter. And to every American, have a joyful weekend.

Thanks, God bless you, and may God bless this country we love.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:55 a.m. on April 18 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on April 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 18, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on April 19.

Remarks at the White House Easter Egg Roll
April 21, 2014

The President. Well, hello, everybody. Is everybody having fun? Happy Easter. This is the biggest event that we have at the White House all year long, and it is our most fun event, because we have a chance to see families from all across the country coming through here. My main and only job, other than officiating over the roll at some point, is to introduce, alongside the Easter Bunny, the person who makes this all possible—we love her dearly—my wife, the First Lady, Michelle Obama.

The First Lady. Thank you, honey. Hey, everybody. Happy Easter Egg Roll Day. Isn't this exciting? It is so wonderful to have so many of you here today. We are celebrating the 136th Easter egg roll. The theme of this year's roll is "Hop Into Health [Healthy],* Swing Into Shape." Yes, I love it.

* White House correction.

And it's going to be a great day. We have beautiful weather because the Easter egg roll is blessed. And we're going to have fun stuff going on. We've got the egg roll. We've got some storytelling. We've got entertainment. We've got wonderful athletes and performers like Cam and so many others. We've got obstacle courses and yoga and face painting and egg hunts. It's just going to be terrific. As Barack said, we love this event. This is the largest event that we do here on the South Lawn. We're going to have more than 30,000 people on the lawn today.

And we're just thrilled that this theme is focusing on one issue that is near and dear to my heart, and it's making sure that our young people are active and healthy. So while you're here, parents, look around. You're going to learn how to make healthy snacks that the kids will actually eat. I'm going to be over there on the chef's stage doing some demonstrations.

And I want to make sure that kids know that healthy eating and being active can be fun, because what today is about is having a whole lot of fun. And I hope you all do that, because we want our kids to be the healthiest and the strongest they can be so they can do well in school and live up to all of their God-given potential. Isn't that right, parents?

The President. Right. Hey!

The First Lady. That's what we want for you all.

And we want to thank the Easter Bunny, as always, for being here. And I would be remiss if I didn't thank the hundreds of volunteers who make today possible. Thank you to our volunteers——

The President. Yay, volunteers!

The First Lady. ——who have been out here setting up the South Lawn, who are going to make sure you guys get through these activities and have a great time.

So you all just enjoy. That's all you have to do from this point on, is have fun. And we'll be down there to participate in the egg roll. The President is going to read. I'm going to read a little bit. So we'll meet you down on the South Lawn, okay?

The President. All right.

The First Lady. All right. Have a great time. Bye-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:34 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In her remarks, the First Lady referred to Camren Anthony Sherman, a 12-year-old singer from Philadelphia, PA.

Remarks at the Snohomish County Fire District 25/Oso Fire Department Firehouse in Arlington, Washington
April 22, 2014

Well, good afternoon, everybody. I just had a chance to tour some of the damage from last month's mudslide and, most importantly, had a chance to spend some time with the families whose loved ones have been lost. I also had a chance to thank some of the amazing first responders, the firefighters, police officers, search-and-rescue crews, and members of the Washington National Guard who have been working around the clock to help this community recover from this devastating incident.

Governor Inslee, Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell, Congresswoman DelBene, Congressman Larsen, and the rest of the elected officials who are here, they've been relentless in making sure that Oso had the resources that it needs. And from the day of the tragedy, I've instructed my team to make sure that they get what they need to make sure that the search-and-rescue mission is going forward the way it should.

A FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team was on the ground immediately after the

mudslide, and a search-and-rescue team was deployed to help locate and recover victims. We immediately approved an emergency declaration to provide additional resources to State and local responders. And I followed that by approving a major disaster declaration to help residents and business owners rebuild and to help State and local and tribal governments with emergency work.

Today, that work continues. There are still families who are searching for loved ones. There are families who have lost everything, and it's going to be a difficult road ahead for them. And that's why I wanted to come here, just to let you know that the country is thinking about all of you and have been throughout this tragedy.

We're not going anywhere. We'll be here as long as it takes. Because, while very few Americans have ever heard of Oso before the disaster struck, we've all been inspired by the incredible way that the community has come together and shown the love and support that they have for each other in ways large and small.

Over the past month, we've seen neighbors and complete strangers donate everything from chainsaws to rain jackets to help with the recovery effort. We've seen families cook meals for rescue workers. We've seen volunteers pull 15-hour days, searching through mud up to 70 feet deep. One resident said: "We're Oso. And we just do it." That's what this community is all about. And I think the outstanding work of Sheriff Willy Harper here helping to coordinate all of this—I was saying, he's a pretty young sheriff, but he has shouldered this burden in an incredible way. And we're very, very proud of him, as we are of all the local responders.

This is family. And these are folks who love this land, and it's easy to see why, because it's gorgeous. And there's a way of life here that's represented. And to see the strength in adversity of this community, I think, should inspire all of us, because this is also what America is all about.

When times get tough, we look out for each other. We get each other's backs. And we recover, and we build, and we come back stronger. And we're always reminded that we're greater together. That's how we'll support each other every step of the way.

I have to say that the families that I met with showed incredible strength and grace through unimaginable pain and difficulty. Uniformly, though, they all wanted to say thank you to the first responders. They were deeply appreciative of the efforts that everybody has made. And I know that many of the first responders have heard that directly, but it doesn't hurt to repeat that we're very appreciative of what you've done.

And I also want to say that some terrific lessons were learned in the midst of very hard times during this process, because almost uniquely, we had not just coordination between State, local, and Federal officials, but also coordination between volunteers and those officials. And I know that it required some improvisation and some kinks getting worked out, but it was important for the family members themselves and the community themselves to be hands on and participate in this process, particularly a community like this one, where folks are hearty and know how to do things and take great pride in being self-reliant. It was important that they weren't just bystanders in this process, they were involved every step of the way.

One last point I'll make: I've received a number of letters from residents—either Darrington or Arlington or Oso itself—over the last several weeks, and one in particular struck me. It was from a firefighter who I may have met today; he didn't identify himself. But he pointed out how those who were operating the heavy machinery during this whole process did so with an incredible care and delicacy because they understood that this wasn't an ordinary job, this wasn't just a matter of moving earth; that this was a matter of making sure that we were honoring and respecting the lives that had been impacted.

And two things were of note in that letter: number one, that this firefighter pointed out properly the incredible work that's been done under very tough circumstances; number two,

he was pointing out what others were doing, not what he was doing. And to see a community come together like this and not be interested in who's getting credit, but just making sure that the job gets done, that says a lot about the character of this place.

And so we're very, very proud of all of you. Michelle and I grieve with you. The whole country is thinking about you. And we're going to make sure that we're there every step of the way as we go through the grieving, the mourning, the recovery. We're going to be strong right alongside you. All right?

Thank you very much. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Oso, WA, resident and volunteer Teresa Smith; and Willy Harper, fire chief, Snohomish County Fire District 25 in Oso.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in Tokyo, Japan
April 24, 2014

Prime Minister Abe. On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to sincerely welcome President Obama as our state guest.

At the outset, I would like to once again express my heartfelt gratitude for the assistance from the United States in the aftermath of the great east Japan earthquake. More than 20,000 servicemembers of the U.S. Forces participated in the Operation Tomodachi. And as a matter of fact, Japanese people were greatly encouraged and helped by the assistance extended from the Government and the people of the United States. And I am truly grateful for that.

Japan has been walking on the path of peace based on its peaceful orientation in a consistent manner for the past 70 years after the Second World War. Japan and the United States share fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, and fundamental human rights, and also we share strategic interests. And the alliance between these two nations is indispensable and irreplaceable as the foundation for a peaceful and prosperity—prosperous Asia-Pacific region.

Your visit to Asia this time is a testament to the U.S. revised policy which attaches importance to this region. This greatly contributes to regional peace and prosperity, and Japan strongly supports and also certainly welcomes this.

My administration intends to contribute to regional peace and prosperity more proactively than ever, in line with the policy of what I call proactive contribution to peace based on the principle on international cooperation. And together with the United States, Japan would like to realize our leading role of the alliance in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific.

Today, at this meeting, I look forward to having exchanges with you on how the alliance should look like in the future, based on the cooperation we have had so far.

President Obama. Well, let me begin by thanking you, Mr. Prime Minister, and your delegation, as well as the Japanese people for the incredibly gracious hospitality that you've provided us so far during this visit.

As you indicated, the U.S.-Japan alliance is the foundation for not only our security in the Asia-Pacific region, but also for the region as a whole. And we have continued to strengthen it. We are looking at a whole range of issues that are challenging at this time, including the threats posed by North Korea and the nuclearization that's been taking place in that country. But because of the strong cooperation between our countries, I am confident that we will continue to make progress in the future.

Of course, the bonds between our countries are not restricted to a military alliance. We represent two of the three largest economies in the world, and we have the opportunity, by working together, to help shape an open and innovative and dynamic economy throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Our shared democratic values means that we have to work together in multilateral settings to deal with regional hotspots around the globe, but also to try to make sure that we are creating a strong set of rules that govern the international order. And the strong people-to-people bonds that we have and the educational and scientific and cultural exchanges that we have means that our friendship and alliance, I'm confident, will continue for generations to come.

So I look forward to very productive meetings today. And I want to once again thank you for your hospitality. As you said, my visit here, I think, once again represents my deep belief that a strong U.S.-Japan relationship is not only good for our countries, but good for the world.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. at Akasaka Palace. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in Tokyo
April 24, 2014

Prime Minister Abe. On behalf of the Japanese people, I would like to express my heartfelt welcome to President Barack Obama, who is in Japan as our state guest. Barack and I met at the White House for the first time last year in February. We talked about all the different themes that one could think of. We had talks without reserve, and we confirmed that we had the same awareness with regard to issues and that we share common objectives.

The Japan-U.S. alliance has been revived very strongly. And the nature of our talks in this time was such that we were able to demonstrate this both inside and outside of the country. Barack said this before: To create a large economic zone in the Asia-Pacific would bring about major benefits to Japan, the United States, and to the Asian nations.

The TPP was indeed a very farsighted plan. As a result of serious exchanges between Barack and myself, Japan was able to make the transition to the next stage, which was to participate in the TPP talks. It's been 1 year since then, and Japan, along with the United States, is in a role to lead, in a major way, the TPP talks. To make the talks between the two leaders a milestone and so as to resolve pending issues between our two countries, Minister Amari and U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Froman decided that they would energetically and earnestly continue the talks.

President Obama and I instructed the Ministers to continue these talks so as to bring to a conclusion the remaining issues so as to bring about a major conclusion of the TPP talks as a whole. Today and tomorrow, the talks will continue. So the joint statement released will see the result of this, and we will formulate the joint statement after this.

Between Japan and the United States, we share values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and rule of law. We have shared these basic values and strategic interests. We are global partners. So we have this partnership and this strong alliance between our two countries. It's the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

Japan espouses the principle of proactive contribution to peace. And the United States is moving forward with its policy of pivoting to the Asia-Pacific. These are contributing to peace and stability in the region. And we mutually appreciated and welcomed each other's policies. Having done so, between Barack and myself, we were able to confirm that the Japan-U.S. alliance would play a leading role in ensuring peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific. This is what I wanted to communicate to you.

With regard to security, including the review of the Japan-U.S. defense cooperation guidelines, wide-ranging security and defensive cooperation would be promoted. We agreed on this point. With regard to the re-

alignment of U.S. forces in Japan, including the transfer of U.S. marines in Okinawa to Guam and relocation of the Futenma Air Station, we would make steady progress on this front. And we reaffirmed the resolve on both sides to make this transpire.

Okinawa Governor Nakaima has requested termination of the operation of the Futenma Air Station in 5 years or less. With regard to this and other requests by the Governor, I explained this to President Barack and requested further cooperation from the United States to alleviate the impact on Okinawa

With regard to various issues which the international society is facing, we had a heart-to-heart talk between Barack and myself. On the situation in Ukraine, changing the status quo against the backdrop of coercion and intimidation would not be condoned. We confirmed this point once again, and the importance to providing support to Ukraine and to cooperate between Japan and the G–7 is something that we agreed on.

With regard to China, based on the rule of law, a free and open Asia-Pacific region will be developed, and we would try to engage China in this region. And we agreed to cooperate toward this end. With regard to moves to try to change the status quo through coercion and intimidation, we agreed that we would clearly oppose such moves. Going forward with regard to policies vis-a-vis China, we agreed to maintain close cooperation between Japan and the United States. This was confirmed.

On the D.P.R.K., we confirmed that close cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and R.O.K. would continue to be important. And this time, Barack made the time to meet with the Yokotas and Mr. Iizuka. At our talks, I requested understanding and continued understanding and cooperation toward the resolution of the abduction issue and the President expressed his support.

This month, I met three times with Ambassador Kennedy. I had this honor. We discussed the space, linear, and cultural exchanges, and so this is a manifestation of the breadth of the cooperative relationship which exists between our two countries. In the talks between the leaders, I put forth once again the proposal to introduce Maglev technology in the United States. We had an exchange of views with regard to energy cooperation, and inclusive of a society where women can shine, and global issues. We agreed that we would cooperate on these issues.

Ambassador Kennedy is the symbol of the friendship which exists between our two countries and the bonds which exist. I'd like to cooperate even more closely with the Ambassador to further deepen cooperative relations between our two countries.

Going forward, what supports the alliance are the youths in both of our countries. To further enhance exchanges between youths, I have told Barack of our plans to send 6,000 Japanese students to the United States this fiscal year. The Japan-U.S. alliance is more robust than ever before.

Barack, you talked about the sushi you had last night, and you said it was the best that you had in your life. We had the heart-to-heart talks for an hour and a half. We talked about issues between our two countries and challenges of the world. We confirmed the bonds and the roles of our two countries, and we talked about the further potential between our—of the relationship between our two countries. It was a very enriching and satisfactory time. And the sushi I had yesterday, for me too was the best I had in my life so far, and it is without a doubt that this is the case.

So between Barack and I, we want to make U.S.-Japan relations more favorable than ever before. And that is all for me. Thank you.

Moderator. [*Inaudible*]—the President of the United States.

President Obama. Konnichiwa. I want to thank Prime Minister Abe for your kind words and your warm welcome, as well as the outstanding sushi and sake yesterday. It is wonderful to be back in Japan. This is my third visit as President. I'm deeply honored to be making the first state visit by a U.S. President in nearly two decades. I'm grateful to Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress for their gracious welcome this morning. And I've once again been

touched by the kindness and hospitality of the Japanese people, your *omotenashi.* [*Laughter*]

I've said many times: The United States is and always will be a Pacific nation. America's security and prosperity is inseparable from the future of this region, and that's why I've made it a priority to renew American leadership in the Asia-Pacific. And the cornerstone of our strategy—and the foundation of the region's security and economic progress—is our historic treaty alliances, including with Japan.

Prime Minister Abe, I want to thank you for your exceptional commitment to our alliance, which in recent years, has grown even stronger. Under your leadership, Japan is also looking to make even greater contributions to peace and security around the world, which the United States very much welcomes.

And last night we had an excellent discussion on a whole range of issues. We agreed to continue deepening our security cooperation. We continue to make progress towards realigning our forces in the region, including Okinawa, which will lessen the impact of our bases on local communities. As we modernize our defense posture in the region, our forces in Japan will include our most advanced military capabilities.

We stand together in calling for disputes in the region, including maritime issues, to be resolved peacefully through dialogue. We share a commitment to fundamental principles such as freedom of navigation and respect for international law. And let me reiterate that our treaty commitment to Japan's security is absolute, and article 5 covers all territories under Japan's administration, including the Senkaku Islands.

Our two nations are united, along with the Republic of Korea, in our determination to bring about the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and in our firm response to North Korea's provocations. And we stand with Japan as it seeks to resolve the tragedy of North Korea's abductions of Japanese citizens.

Beyond Northeast Asia, Japan and the United States are working together to enhance our economic and diplomatic and security coordination with our ASEAN partners in Southeast Asia. We're deepening our cooperation as global partners, from the relief we delivered together after the typhoon in the Philippines last year to our unified response to Russia's military intervention in Ukraine.

We made important progress in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, which will support good jobs and growth in the United States as well as economic reform and revitalization here in Japan. We're closer to agreement on issues like automobiles and agriculture. I've been very clear and honest that American manufacturers and farmers need to have meaningful access to markets that are included under TPP, including here in Japan. That's what will make it a good deal for America: for our workers and our consumers and our families. That's my bottom line, and I can't accept anything less.

At the same time, Prime Minister Abe is committed to renewing Japan's economy, and TPP is a vital part of that. As I've told Shinzo, Japan has the opportunity—in part through TPP—to play a key leadership role in the Asia-Pacific region for this century. So now is the time for bold steps that are needed to reach a comprehensive agreement, and I continue to believe we can get this done.

I would add that our countries are more prosperous when we tap the talents of all of our citizens. So I want to commend the Prime Minister for his commitment to bringing more women into the workforce. And because our economic security also depends on energy security, we're going to keep working together on clean and efficient alternatives to fossil fuels both at home and abroad that can power the global economy while combating climate change.

Finally, I'm pleased that we continue to deepen the extraordinary ties between our people, especially our young people, like the Japanese students that I'll be meeting later today. And I'm proud to announce that we're launching a new program that will help even more Japanese students come to the United States to improve their English language skills and gain valuable experience working in American businesses and organizations. And that's part of our effort to double student exchanges

by 2020, bonds among our young people that can bring us closer together for decades to come.

So, Prime Minister Abe, thank you for your friendship, your partnership, and the progress that we've made together. I want to thank you and the people of Japan for being such extraordinary allies. Standing together, I have no doubt about what our nations can achieve. So as you say here, *ganbarou.* Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you very much for that. We'd like to start to entertain questions. For those of you who have a question, please raise your hand, and I will be calling on you. With regard to the press corps accompanying the President, Press Secretary Carney will be choosing and selecting the questioners. So we'd like to entertain questions from the Japanese press first. Enman San, please.

Senkaku Islands/China-U.S. Relations

Q. My name is Enman from Asahi Shimbun I'd like to raise a question with regard to security. First, my question is addressed to Prime Minister Abe. President Obama, with regard to the defense of the Senkaku Islands, he had clearly stated his security stance based on the security treaty. And what kind of discussion did you have on the exercise of collective security rights?

To President Obama, the following question: Based on the security treaty, the obligation to defend Senkaku Islands, this is the first time that you referred to this issue. Why did you mention this? Could you talk about the import of your statement?

Prime Minister Abe. In—through the talks with President Obama, as President Obama mentioned at the outset in his speech, between our two countries, we have the security treaty, and under the security treaty, all of the abilities and capabilities to perform the commitment is provided. And this includes all territories under administration of Japan, inclusive of the Senkaku Islands. And any unilateral action to undermine Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands will be opposed by the United States. We agreed on this point.

On the exercise of the right of collective defense, presently in Japan, the legal basis for security is being discussed and with regard to the stability of Japan and regional safety and stability, and to function the alliance effectively and to contribute to safety and the stability of the region, we are making these studies. This is what I have explained to President Obama. Concerning such studies and examinations being made in Japan, this was welcomed and this would be supported. That was the position expressed by President Obama.

President Obama. Our position is not new. Secretary Hagel, our Defense Secretary, when he visited here, Secretary of State John Kerry when he visited here, both indicated what has been our consistent position throughout. We don't take a position on final sovereignty determinations with respect to Senkakus, but historically, they have been administered by Japan, and we do not believe that they should be subject to change unilaterally. And what is a consistent part of the alliance is that the treaty covers all territories administered by Japan. So this is not a new position, this is a consistent one.

In our discussions, I emphasized with Prime Minister Abe the importance of resolving this issue peacefully: not escalating the situation, keeping the rhetoric low, not taking provocative actions, and trying to determine how both Japan and China can work cooperatively together. And I want to make that larger point: We have strong relations with China. They are a critical country not just to the region, but to the world.

Obviously, with a huge population, a growing economy, we want to continue to encourage the peaceful rise of China. I think there's enormous opportunities for trade, development, working on common issues like climate change with China. But what we've also emphasized—and I will continue to emphasize throughout this trip—is that all of us have responsibilities to help maintain basic rules of the road and an international order so that large countries, small countries, all have to abide by what is considered just and fair and

that we are resolving disputes in peaceful fashion.

And this is a message that I've delivered directly to the Chinese, and it's one that I think is entirely consistent with China being successful. I think the alternative is a situation in which large countries, like the United States or China or Russia or other countries, feel as if whenever they think it's expedient, they can take actions that disadvantage smaller countries, and that's not the kind of world that is going to be stable and prosperous and secure over the long term.

So we are invested in an international order, and that applies to a whole range of issues, including maritime issues. My hope is, is that China will continue to engage with us and other countries in the region where we do not take a position on the particular sovereignty of this piece of land or this rock, but we do take a position in making sure that all countries are following basic international procedures in resolving these disputes. And if that happens, then I think not only will China be successful, but I think there's a great potential for Chinese and Japanese cooperation, Chinese and Vietnamese cooperation, cooperation with the Philippines and China, all of which will benefit the peoples of the region.

White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney. The next question comes from Jim Acosta of CNN.

Senkaku Islands/Syria/Ukraine/North Korea

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. *Arigato,* Mr. Prime Minister. Mr. President, in regards to the Senkaku Islands, I just want to make sure that this is absolutely clear. Are you saying that the U.S. would consider using military force were China to have some sort of military incursion in those islands to protect those islands? And how does that not draw another red line that you would have to enforce, putting U.S. credibility, your credibility on the line once again, as it was in the case with Syria and Russia? And on another key security issue, you mentioned North Korea in your meeting with the Prime Minister. Are you issuing a warning to North Korea that there should not be another nuclear test?

And to Prime Minister Abe, do you have confidence in President Obama's assurances about your security when the U.S. and the West were unable to stop Russia's advances in Ukraine? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, Jim, let me unpack that question because there's a whole bunch of assumptions in there, some of which I don't agree with.

First of all, the treaty between the United States and Japan preceded my birth, so obviously, this isn't a red line that I'm drawing, it is the standard interpretation over multiple administrations of the terms of the alliance, which is that territories under the administration of Japan are covered under the treaty. There's no shift in position. There's no red line that's been drawn. We're simply applying the treaty.

At the same time, as I've said directly to the Prime Minister: that it would be a profound mistake to continue to see escalation around this issue rather than dialogue and confidence-building measures between Japan and China. And we are going to do everything we can to encourage that diplomatically.

With respect to the other issues that you raise, our position, Jim—the United States position—is that countries should abide by international law; that those laws, those rules, those norms are violated when you gas children or when you invade the territory of another country. Now, the implication of the question, I think, is, is that each and every time a country violates one of those norms, the United States should go to war or stand prepared to engage militarily, and if it doesn't, then somehow we're not serious about those norms. Well, that's not the case.

Right now we have 87 percent of Syria's chemical weapons have already been removed from Syria. There's about 13 percent left. That's as a consequence of U.S. leadership. And the fact that we didn't have to fire a missile to get that accomplished is not a failure to uphold those international norms, it's a suc-

cess. It's not a complete success until we have the last 13 percent out.

With respect to Russia and Ukraine, we've been very clear about the fact that there's not going to be a military solution to the problem in Ukraine, but we have already applied sanctions that have had an impact on the Russian economy, and we have continued to hold out the prospect—the possibility—to resolve this issue diplomatically. There was some possibility that Russia could take the wiser course after the meetings in Geneva. So far at least, we have seen them not abide by the spirit or the letter of the agreement in Geneva. And instead, we continue to see militias and armed men taking over buildings, harassing folks who are disagreeing with them, and destabilizing the region, and we haven't seen Russia step up and discourage that.

On the other side, you've seen the Government in Kiev take very concrete steps, in introducing an amnesty law and offering a whole range of reforms with respect to the Constitution, that are consistent with what was discussed in Geneva. And my expectation is, is that if, once again, Russia fails to abide by both the spirit and the letter of what was discussed in Geneva, that there will be further consequences and we will ramp up further sanctions.

That doesn't mean that the problem is going to be solved right away. These are difficult issues. But what we try to do is to make sure that we are very clear about what we stand for, what we believe in, and we are willing to take actions on behalf of those values, those norms, and those ideals.

Q. And on North Korea?

President Obama. And the question was?

Q. Is there a warning to North Korea to not conduct another nuclear test?

President Obama. North Korea has engaged in provocative actions for the last several decades. It's been an irresponsible actor on the international stage for the last several decades. So our message on North Korea has been consistent throughout. They are the most isolated country in the world. They are subject to more international sanctions and international condemnation than any country in the world. As a consequence, their people suffer as much as any peoples in the world.

And what we've said is, if you are, in fact, serious about North Korea being a normal nation, then you've got to start changing your behavior. And that starts with the basic principle of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula.

Now, am I optimistic that there's going to be a major strategic shift in North Korea's attitudes any time soon? Probably not. But what I am confident about is, is that working with Japan, working with the Republic of Korea, and working with China and other interested parties in the region, that we can continue to apply more and more pressure on North Korea so that at some juncture, they end up taking a different course.

In the meantime, they're dangerous, and we have to make sure that we are guarding against any provocations getting out of hand. This is one of the reasons why the alliance is so important and collective self-defense is so important. But we are not surprised when they engage in irresponsible behavior. That's been their pattern for the last couple of decades. And what we have to do is to continue to try to contain and mitigate the potential damage that this behavior has and continue to put pressure on them so that we can see a shift.

And China's participation in pushing the D.P.R.K. in a different direction is critically important as well. They have not only an opportunity, but, I think, a security interest and a broader interest in a peaceful resolution to what has been a generation-long conflict and is the most destabilizing, dangerous situation in all of the Asia-Pacific region.

Prime Minister Abe. First of all, I would like to state the following: The Japan-U.S. alliance is unwavering, and it's indispensable to maintain the Asia-Pacific region peaceful and stable. Japan-U.S. alliance and the relationship and the strengthening thereof is very beneficial. And to strengthen our bilateral relationship, you have a tremendous enthusiasm. I believe in that. And your enthusiasm and the United States is what we place our confidence in. And in the talks between us today, that

confidence became even stronger. This is something that I wished to mention to you.

And the alliance between our two countries in order to strengthen this—or if we strengthen this, this is not applying pressure to other countries or intimidating other countries. This is for the peace and stability of the region and to strengthen this and to make this region a law-abiding region. Changes of the status quo based on intimidation and coercion will not be condoned. We want to make this a peaceful region which values laws, and in doing this, strengthening of our bilateral alliance is extremely important. On this point, I fully trust President Obama.

The reporter has mentioned the situation in Ukraine. In The Hague, the G–7 meeting took place, and Prime—President Obama exerted strong leadership, and the G–7 was united in its approach toward Russia. Annexation of Crimea in violation of the international laws would not be condoned—that was the message which was generated to Russia. We would continue to communicate accurate information—information message under the leadership of President Obama to Russia.

And with regard to the D.P.R.K., unless they change the present policies, there is no future for the public in the D.P.R.K. We need to make the D.P.R.K. understand this, and pressure must be applied with cooperation between the international society to achieve this. And China holds the key to this. Japan, United States, and R.O.K. must exercise its influence over China.

With regard to the Asia-Pacific region as well as international society, there are various challenges, and the alliance must continue to be robust so that we can cooperate to resolve issues in Asia and in the world.

Moderator. Another question from the Japanese press, please. Adachi from TV-Asahi.

Japan-U.S. Trade Relations/Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

Q. On the TPP, I'd like to ask the question to the two leaders. First to Prime Minister Abe, regarding TPP, negotiations and consultations are to continue, you have said. What are the remaining issues? And to what extent have you made progress at the Diet? With regard to the five sensitive items, they resolve that even a staged elimination of tariffs would not be accepted. Do you believe under such circumstances, agreement can be reached?

The next question to President Obama. Japan, with regard to rice and wheat and beef and pork, is very careful about reducing tariffs. What is your view on this for agreement between Japan and the United States? Agriculture, produce tariffs—what is the ideal resolution to this issue in your view, please?

Prime Minister Abe. On the TPP, this is to create a major economic zone in the growth area of Asia: basic human rights, law rule of law, and democracy with countries that share these values. We will be creating new rules, and it is for this purpose. It is the 21st-century type of economic zone which we wish to create. For the region as a whole, it's strategically very important, and we see eye to eye on this point, between President Obama and myself.

The remaining issues must be overcome very quickly and resolved so that TPP as a whole can be concluded. We should cooperate and exert further leadership. And that is the task that President Obama and I have, I believe. And from a broad perspective, along with President Obama, we want to make decisions and judgments. On the part of our country, there is this resolution adopted by the Diet. We will take proper heed of this so that we will choose the path in the best interest of the country. But we also hope to conclude the talks in a favorable way. We want to try to achieve conclusion of the talks as a whole.

President Obama. Well, I will leave the details of the negotiations to the negotiators. I think it's fair to say that there are certain sectors of the Japanese economy—agricultural sectors, the auto sector—in which market access has been restricted historically, certainly compared to the market access that Japan has had to U.S. consumers. And those are all issues that people are all familiar with and, at some point, have to be resolved. I believe that point is now.

Prime Minister Abe, I think courageously, has recognized that although Japan continues to be one of the most powerful economies in the world, that over the last two decades, its pace of growth and innovation had stalled and that if in fact Japan wanted to push forward in this new century, then reforms were going to have to take place. And he has initiated a number of those reforms.

TPP is consistent with those reforms. And as Prime Minister Abe said, there's strategic importance to this, because what's happening now is, we're shaping the economic environment for the fastest growing region in the world, not just for this year or next year, but potentially, for this decade and the next decade. And what rules apply—whether we are operating in a fair and transparent way, whether intellectual property is respected, whether markets are freely accessible, whether in fact countries are able to increase trade and, as a consequence, increase jobs and prosperity for their people—a lot of that is going to depend on choices and decisions that we make right now. TPP is an opportunity for us to make that happen.

Now, there are always political sensitivities in any kind of trade discussions. Prime Minister Abe has got to deal with his politics; I've got to deal with mine. And I think that Congress has passed, for example, recently a free trade agreement with the Republic of Korea and other countries around the world, and it's been based on notions of reciprocity and notions that if we tear down some of these existing barriers, that both countries can do better, both countries can grow.

This is even more challenging because we have more countries involved. But my basis for doing this is because, ultimately, I think it's good for America to have a Asia-Pacific region where our companies can innovate, can compete, can sell our goods and services freely, where our intellectual property is protected. I think that's going to create more jobs in the United States. It's going to create greater prosperity in the United States. But it's a win-win situation, because I think the same is going to be true for Japan, the same is going to be true for Malaysia, the same is going to be true for Vietnam, the same is going to be true for the other countries that are in this discussion.

But that means that short term, all of us have to move out of our comfort zones and not just expect that we're going to get access to somebody else's market without providing access to our own. And it means that we have to sometimes push our constituencies beyond their current comfort levels, because ultimately, it's going to deliver a greater good for all people. Okay?

Press Secretary Carney. Julie Pace of the Associated Press has the final question.

Ukraine/International Sanctions Against Russia

Q. I wanted to go back to the situation in Ukraine. You said that Russia is so far not abiding by the Geneva agreement, but you appeared to indicate that you have not made a decision yet on levying further sanctions. So, first, can you just clarify whether you have or have not made that decision? And if you have not, what gives you confidence that holding off on further sanctions might change Russia's calculus? And couldn't they just be using the Geneva agreement as a stalling tactic as they weigh military options or try to influence the May Ukraine elections?

And, Prime Minister Abe, there are historical disputes in Asia that are a powerful source of tension and instability in this region. What responsibility do you and other leaders in Asia have to avoid inflammatory language or actions, including further visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, that could further exacerbate these tensions? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, Julie, we have been consistently preparing for the possibility that, in fact, Geneva didn't deliver on its promise. I think you'll remember, I was asked the day that the discussions had concluded what my hopes were, and I said, well, I'm not overly optimistic about the ability to deliver. And so—but what that means is that we have been preparing for the prospect that we're going to have to engage in further sanctions. Those are teed up.

It requires some technical work, and it also requires coordination with other countries. So the fact that I haven't announced them yet doesn't mean that they haven't been prepared and teed up. At the point where they are ready to go, I guarantee you, AP is going to be the first to know.

Q. I'll hold you to that. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. Yes. But I think it's important to emphasize that throughout this process, our goal has been to change Mr. Putin's calculus; that our preference is to resolve this issue diplomatically; that sanctions hurt Russia more than anybody else, but they're disruptive to the global economy and they're unnecessary if in fact Russia would recognize that the Government in Kiev is prepared to have serious negotiations that preserve the rights of all Ukrainians, including Russian speakers, and is prepared to decentralize in ways that, originally, Mr. Putin said were of utmost importance to him.

So far at least, they have not chosen the wise path. And over the medium and long term, this is going to hurt Russia as much as it hurts Ukraine. Already you've seen a whole lot of money, a whole lot of foreign investors leaving Russia because they don't see this as a reliable place to invest. And Russia needs to reform its economy and needs to diversify its economy because the rest of the world is moving further and further off the fossil fuels that are the primary way that Russia is able to bankroll itself. And the decisions right now that are being made in Ukraine will not help that process, it will hinder it.

Now, I understand that additional sanctions may not change Mr. Putin's calculus. That's possible. How well they change his calculus in part depends on not just us applying sanctions, but also the cooperation of other countries. And that's why there's got to be a lot of diplomatic spadework done at each phase of this process.

And in discussions that I've had with Prime Minister Abe, in discussions that I have with my European counterparts, my consistent point has been there's some things the United States can do alone, but ultimately, it's going to have to be a joint effort, a collective effort. And so while we've done our homework and we have things teed up, it's also important for us to make sure that we're in consultation with all these countries each and every time that we apply additional sanctions.

Q. Can I just clarify?

President Obama. Sure.

Q. Are you saying that you have made a decision to apply further sanctions, but you just have to wait for a technical process to play out? Or are you saying you have not made the decision yet to levy those sanctions?

President Obama. What I'm saying is, is that we have prepared for the possibility of applying additional sanctions, that there are a whole bunch of technical issues behind that; that there's always the possibility that Russia, tomorrow or the next day, reverses course and takes a different approach, which, by the way, would simply involve them stating clearly that they actually believe in what they said in Geneva, that they actually call on those who are holding buildings in the south and the east of Ukraine to get out of those buildings, that they are encouraged by the willingness of the Kiev Government to follow through on amnesty, that they allow OSCE monitors in, and that they support an election process where Ukrainians are able to make their own decisions. So it wouldn't require a radical shift. It would require the kinds of steps that, on paper at least, they already agreed to as recently as last week.

Do I think they're going to do that? So far, the evidence doesn't make me hopeful. And I think it's fair to say that, as we've said earlier this week, this is a matter of days and not weeks. Assuming that they do not follow through, we will follow through on what we said, which is that there will be additional consequences on the Russians.

Prime Minister Abe. First of all, my basic recognition of history is such that politicians have to have a sense of humility when it comes to history. Japan, 70 years ago in the war—when the war ended, to many persons, especially persons in Asia, we had inflicted tremendous damage and pain. And we are—have reflected on this, and we started our work after

the war. For 70 years, as a peace-loving nation, we have steadily tread the path, and that is Japan, and that is the Japanese public.

We—ever since we were poor, we tried to contribute to Asia. We made our maximum efforts, even when we were poor. And many nations in Asia have evaluated highly Japan's work. In the Abe Government, there is no change in stance compared to previous Governments. Last year's end, I visited Yasukuni, and to those that have fought for the country and that have been wounded, that have passed away, I have prayed and prayed for the souls of such persons. That was the purpose of my visit to the shrine.

And many leaders of the world share this common attitude, I believe. And at the same time, in Yasukuni Shrine, there is a remembrance memorial called Chinreisha, and I visited this memorial. This has not been reported much, but in this memorial, those who have passed away as a result of the war—not only Japanese, but those from all over the world—are honored there. So I have visited this memorial so that never again people would suffer in wars. I renewed my resolve to create such a society and such a world, and I have renewed my pledge not to engage in war. And I have released a statement to that effect.

To my—with regard to my basic thinking, I will continue to explain and make efforts so that people will understand. I should like to accumulate such efforts. After the war, in order to create a democratic and free nation, we have made tremendous efforts, and we have respected persons—human rights, and we have valued the rule of law not only in Japan, but in the world. We want to increase regions of this kind.

And so we would like to accumulate efforts toward this end: peace and a prosperous world. In order to build such a world, we would like to contribute. And by so doing, I hope that many countries of the world would understand.

Moderator. With this, we conclude the joint press conference.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:40 p.m. in Main Suite No. 221 at the Akasaka Palace. In his remarks, the President referred to Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. He also referred to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Prime Minister Abe referred to Minister in Charge of Economic Revitalization Akira Amari of Japan; Shigeru and Sakie Yokota, parents of Megumi Yokota, who was abducted by North Korea in 1977; and Shigeo Iizuka, brother of Yakeo Taguchi, who was abducted by North Korea in 1978. Prime Minister Abe and some reporters spoke in Japanese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at the Miraikan Science Expo in Tokyo
April 24, 2014

Konnichiwa. Please sit down. Thank you so much. Well, I want to thank Dr. Mohri and everyone at the Miraikan for welcoming me here today. And it is wonderful to see all of these outstanding students. Dr. Mohri is a veteran of two space shuttle missions, embodies the spirit that brings us here together: the incredible cooperation in science and technology between Japan and the United States.

I want to thank all the students that I had a chance to meet with as we went around the various exhibits. We heard a message from the International Space Station. We saw some truly amazing robots, although I have to say, the robots were a little scary. They were too lifelike. They were amazing. And these students showed me some of their experiments, including some soccer-playing robots that we just saw. And all of the exhibits, I think, showed the incredible breakthroughs in technology and science that are happening every single day.

And historically, Japan and the United States have been at the cutting edge of innovation. From some of the first modern calculators decades ago to the devices that we hold in our hands today—the smartphones that I'm

sure every young person here uses—Japan and the United States have often led the way in the innovations that change our lives and improve our lives.

And that's why I'm so pleased that the United States and Japan are renewing the 10-year agreement that makes so much of our science and technology cooperation possible. Both of our societies celebrate innovation, celebrate science, celebrate technology. We're close partners in the industries of tomorrow. And it reminds us why it's so important for us to continue to invest in science, technology, math, engineering. These are the schools—these are the skills that students like all of you are going to need for the global economy, and that includes our talented young women.

Historically, sometimes, young women have been less represented in the sciences, and one of the things that I've really been pushing for is to make sure that young women, just like young men, are getting trained in these fields, because we need all the talent and brainpower to solve some of the challenges that we're going to face in the future.

Earlier today Prime Minister Abe and I announced a new initiative to increase student exchanges, including bringing more Japanese students to the United States. So I hope you'll come. Welcome. And it's part of our effort to double students' exchanges in the coming years. As we saw today, young people like you have at your fingertips more technology and more power than even the greatest innovators in previous generations. So there's no limit to what you can achieve, and the United States of America wants to be your partner.

So I'm very proud to have been here today. I was so excited by what I saw. The young people here were incredibly impressive. And as one of our outstanding astronauts described, as we just are a few days after Earth Day, it's important when we look at this globe and we think about how technology has allowed us to understand the planet that we share and to understand not only the great possibilities, but also the challenges and dangers from things like climate change, that your generation is going to help us to find answers to some of the questions that we have to answer, whether it's, how do we feed more people in an environment in which it's getting warmer? How do we make sure that we're coming up with new energy sources that are less polluting and can save our environment? How do we find new medicines that can cure diseases that take so many lives around the globe? To the robots that we saw that can save people's lives after a disaster because they can go into places like Fukushima that it may be very dangerous for live human beings to enter into. These are all applications, but it starts with the imaginations and the vision of young people like you.

So I'm very proud of all of you and glad to see that you're doing such great work. You have counterparts in the United States who share your excitement about technology and science. I hope you get a chance to meet them. I hope you get a chance to visit the United States. As far as I know, we don't have one of those cool globes, but we have some other pretty neat things in the United States as well. And I hope we can share those with you if and when you come.

Thank you very much. And I just want you to know in closing that I really believe that each of you can make a difference. *Gambatte kudasai.* You can do this thing if you apply yourselves. So thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:27 p.m. at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan). In his remarks, he referred to Mamoru Mohri, director, National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan).

Statement on Armenian Remembrance Day
April 24, 2014

Today we commemorate the Meds Yeghern and honor those who perished in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. We recall the horror of what happened 99 years ago,

when 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire, and we grieve for the lives lost and the suffering endured by those men, women, and children. We are joined in solemn commemoration by millions in the United States and across the world. In so doing, we remind ourselves of our shared commitment to ensure that such dark chapters of human history are never again repeated.

I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view has not changed. A full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all of our interests. Peoples and nations grow stronger and build a foundation for a more just and tolerant future by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past. We continue to learn this lesson in the United States, as we strive to reconcile some of the darkest moments in our own history. We recognize and commend the growing number of courageous Armenians and Turks who have already taken this path and encourage more to do so, with the backing of their governments and mine. And we recall with pride the humanitarian efforts undertaken by the American Committee for Syrian and Armenian Relief, funded by donations from Americans, which saved the lives of countless Armenians and others from vulnerable communities displaced in 1915.

As we honor through remembrance those Armenian lives that were unjustly taken in 1915, we are inspired by the extraordinary courage and great resiliency of the Armenian people in the face of such tremendous adversity and suffering. I applaud the countless contributions that Armenian Americans have made to American society, culture, and communities. We share a common commitment to supporting the Armenian people as they work to build a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous nation.

Today our thoughts and prayers are with Armenians everywhere, as we recall the horror of the Meds Yeghern, honor the memory of those lost, and reaffirm our enduring commitment to the people of Armenia and to the principle that such atrocities must always be remembered if we are to prevent them from occurring ever again.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by Emperor Akihito of Japan in Tokyo
April 24, 2014

Good evening. *Konbanwa.* Your Majesties, I thank you for the extraordinary welcome that you have given to me and my delegation today, and I thank you for your gracious hospitality tonight.

Prime Minister Abe and Mrs. Abe, distinguished guests and friends, It has been nearly 50 years since my mother first brought me to Japan, but I have never forgotten the kindness that the Japanese people showed me as a 6-year-old boy far away from home. I remain grateful for the welcome that Your Majesties gave me when I returned here as President, on the 20th anniversary of your ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne.

And I am deeply honored to be with you as a guest of state tonight, which is a reflection of the great friendship between our two peoples.

It's also very humbling. I stand here as the 44th President of the United States. Your Majesty is the 125th Emperor of Japan. [*Laughter*] And your family has embodied the spirit of the Japanese people across more than two millennia. And we feel that spirit here tonight in His Majesty's commitment to achieving peace and the resilience of the Japanese people who, despite difficult decades, despite the tragedies of 3 years ago, continue to inspire the world with your strength and discipline and dignity—your *hinkaku.*

And I saw that spirit today. In the glory of the Meiji Shrine, I experienced the beauty of a religious ceremony rooted in Japan's ancient past. In my work with Prime Minister Abe, we have strengthened our alliance for today, an alliance that will never be broken. And in the eager students that I met and the remarkable

technologies that I saw, I glimpsed the future our nations can forge together.

Through all of this, although we are separated by vast oceans, our peoples come together every day in every realm. We create and build together, sparking new innovations for a changing world. We study and research together, unlocking new discoveries to cure disease and save lives. We go to the far corners of the Earth together, to keep the peace and feed the hungry. And we go to space together to understand the mysteries of the universe. We stand together in moments of joy, as when Japanese baseball players help propel America's teams to victory. And we stand together in moments of difficulty and pain, as we did 3 years ago.

Your Majesty, we will never forget how, in those trying days, you spoke from this palace directly to the people of this nation. And I would like to conclude by recalling the spirit of your message then, because it also remains our wish tonight, for the friendship and alliance between our two peoples.

May we never give up hope, may we always take care of each other, and may we continue to live strong for tomorrow.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:48 p.m. at the Imperial Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Empress Michiko of Japan.

Joint Statement—The United States and Japan: Shaping the Future of the Asia-Pacific and Beyond
April 25, 2014

The relationship between the United States of America and Japan is founded on mutual trust, a common vision for a rules-based international order, a shared commitment to upholding democratic values and promoting open markets, and deep cultural and people-to-people ties. The U.S.-Japan Alliance is the cornerstone for regional peace and security as well as a platform for global cooperation. The U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific and Japan's policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation both contribute to the Alliance playing a leading role in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific.

Close U.S.-Japan cooperation is essential in managing and responding to long-standing and emerging threats and challenges in Asia and around the world. Recent events underscore the importance of coordinated action to uphold regional and global rules and norms. At the March 25 Trilateral Summit in The Hague, the leaders of the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea urged North Korea to take concrete actions to meet its international obligations on nuclear and missile issues and to address, without delay, humanitarian concerns, including the abductions issue. In concert with our G–7 partners, the United States and Japan have condemned Russia over its illegal attempt to annex Crimea and are consulting closely on further measures against Russia over its deplorable conduct, while strongly urging Russia to deescalate tensions in Ukraine. Together, we are taking concrete steps to support Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and economic stability. The United States and Japan are working collaboratively to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue, support Middle East peace efforts, contribute to Afghan reconstruction, and improve the situation in Syria, including through the disposal of its chemical stockpiles. The United States and Japan recognize that China can play an important role in addressing all of these challenges, and both countries reaffirm their interest in building a productive and constructive relationship with China.

The United States and Japan, as maritime nations with global trade networks that depend on open seas, underscore the importance of maintaining a maritime order based upon respect for international law, including the freedom of navigation and overflight. The United States and Japan share strong concern over recent actions that have raised tensions in the East China Sea and South China Sea, such as

the uncoordinated declaration of an Air Defense Identification Zone in the East China Sea. Our two countries oppose any attempt to assert territorial or maritime claims through the use of intimidation, coercion or force. The United States and Japan urge the establishment of confidence-building measures among governments and militaries in the region to address these tensions. In the South China Sea, we call on countries concerned to clarify the basis of their maritime claims in accordance with international law. We support efforts for the early establishment of an effective Code of Conduct as a way to reduce the risk of an unintended incident. The United States and Japan fully support the use of diplomatic and legal means, including international arbitration, to settle maritime disputes in the South China Sea.

Given the common security challenges our two countries face, the United States and Japan are strengthening and modernizing our security alliance as directed by the Security Consultative Committee, including through the revision of the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation. The United States has deployed its most advanced military assets to Japan and provides all necessary capabilities to meet its commitments under the U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security. These commitments extend to all the territories under the administration of Japan, including the Senkaku Islands. In that context, the United States opposes any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands. The United States appreciates Japan's establishment of a National Security Council and creation of a legal framework for information security that will facilitate enhanced policy and intelligence coordination between the two countries. The United States welcomes and supports Japan's consideration of the matter of exercising the right of collective self-defense. The United States and Japan reaffirmed the importance of the U.S. extended deterrence to maintain regional security. The United States and Japan are also making sustained progress towards realizing a geographically distributed, operationally resilient and politically sustainable U.S. force posture in the Asia Pacific, including the development of Guam as a strategic hub. The early relocation of Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to Camp Schwab and consolidation of bases in Okinawa will ensure a long-term sustainable presence for U.S. forces. In this context, we reaffirm our commitment to reducing the impact of U.S. forces on Okinawa.

The United States and Japan also coordinate closely in multilateral financial and economic fora to advance trade liberalization and promote economic growth. Our joint efforts are grounded in support for an international economic system that is free, open, and transparent, and embraces innovation. In order to further enhance economic growth, expand regional trade and investment, and strengthen the rules-based trading system, the United States and Japan are committed to taking the bold steps necessary to complete a high-standard, ambitious, comprehensive Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. Today, we have identified a path forward on important bilateral TPP issues. This marks a key milestone in the TPP negotiations and will inject fresh momentum into the broader talks. We now call upon all TPP partners to move as soon as possible to take the necessary steps to conclude the agreement. Even with this step forward, there is still much work to be done to conclude TPP.

We also support Japan's Chairmanship in the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its accession to the OECD and support China's hosting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and Australia's hosting of the G20 this year. We are working together in the APEC and the G20 on the promotion of the role of women, which is an important domestic and foreign policy priority for both countries. Through the Equal Futures Partnership and upcoming events such as the White House Summit on Working Families and Japan's international symposium on women's empowerment, the two countries are committed to ensuring women's full participation in society. Furthermore, the United States and Japan continue to be world leaders in high-

technology, where our collaboration is expanding the frontiers of robotics, space, and medical science.

The United States and Japan view energy security as vital to prosperity and stability. Both sides welcomed the prospect of U.S. LNG exports in the future since additional global supplies will benefit Japan and other strategic partners. The United States welcomed Japan's new Strategic Energy Plan, which includes global, peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy and acceleration of the introduction of renewable energy. Both countries are working together to promote the development of clean energy, including by facilitating business cooperation and deepening civil nuclear cooperation. These steps are part of a broader effort to address the urgent challenge of global climate change. Both countries plan to put forward robust post-2020 nationally determined contributions, building on decisions taken at the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP–19) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in order to promote the adoption of a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force under the UNFCCC applicable to all Parties at COP–21 in Paris in December 2015. We will continue to work with other countries on complementary initiatives to encourage reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The United States and Japan are committed to promoting peace, stability, and economic growth throughout the world, including in Africa. Through our recently launched senior-level U.S.-Japan Development Dialogue, we are expanding our development cooperation in these areas. Furthermore, the United States and Japan are continuing bilateral policy coordination to address other global challenges and promote our common agenda, such as women's empowerment, human security, humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction, the post-2015 development agenda, global health, climate change, counter-terrorism and transnational organized crime, cyber policy, the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, nuclear security, and cooperation at the United Nations, including in peacekeeping. The United States looks forward to a reformed UN Security Council that includes Japan as a permanent member. Our two countries are continuing to cooperate in the field of disaster risk management based on the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The United States and Japan renew our commitment to deepening diplomatic, economic, and security cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), recognizing the importance of ASEAN unity and centrality to regional security and prosperity. We are coordinating closely to support ASEAN and its affiliated fora as its members seek to build a regional economic community and address trans-border challenges, including cybersecurity and cybercrime. In this context, the two countries view the East Asia Summit as the premier political and security forum in the region. We support the Asian Development Bank work to address the region's infrastructure and connectivity needs. The United States and Japan are collaborating to assist Southeast Asian littoral states in building maritime domain awareness and other capacities for maritime safety and security so that they can better enforce law, combat illicit trafficking and weapons proliferation, and protect marine resources. The robust U.S. and Japanese civilian and military response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines demonstrated our ability to collectively assist the region in disaster relief and risk reduction.

To achieve our shared objectives of promoting peace and economic prosperity in the Asia-Pacific and around the globe, the United States and Japan are strengthening trilateral cooperation with like-minded partners, including the Republic of Korea, Australia, and India.

The United States and Japan reaffirm our long-standing and indispensable partnership in shaping the future of the Asia-Pacific and beyond through close cooperation and collaboration.

Annex: Leaders Statement on U.S.-Japan Bilateral Exchanges

Broad people-to-people exchange between Japan and the United States has been a key pillar of our Alliance since its inception. Close ties and shared values between the people of the United States and the people of Japan form the foundation of the global partnership between our nations.

To ensure the future strength of the U.S.-Japan relationship, the two governments share the goal, established by the U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), of doubling two-way student exchange by the year 2020.

Recognizing that people-to-people exchange is an irreplaceable investment in the future of the Alliance, President Obama and Prime Minister Abe announced their intent to create a new bilateral exchange program that would enable Japanese youth to visit the United States, enhance their English language abilities, and develop professional skills through internship opportunities. The leaders also intend to explore internship opportunities for U.S. youth in Japan.

Furthermore, Japan is going to send 6,000 Japanese students to the United States in fiscal year 2014 through student exchange support programs, including public-private partnerships such as the TOBITATE! Young Ambassador Program, further contributing to reaching our shared goal established by CULCON. Japan and the United States also plan to explore new avenues for exchange, including support for Japanese researchers and programs linking the next generation of Japanese and U.S. leaders and friends.

The Japanese government's program inviting Japanese-American leaders to Japan has promoted broad understanding and support for the U.S.-Japan Alliance. Building on this successful effort, Japan intends to broaden the scope of this initiative in fiscal year 2014 to further deepen mutual understanding.

The Japanese government's ongoing KAKEHASHI Project, under which a total of 4,600 young Japanese and U.S. citizens are expected to visit each other's countries in exchange programs, has made a significant contribution to fostering mutual understanding. In addition, following the March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, the U.S. government and the U.S.-Japan Council launched the TOMODACHI Initiative, a path-breaking public-private partnership that engages the private sector in promoting U.S.-Japan youth exchange. To date, with the support of over eighty U.S. and Japanese companies, organizations, and individuals, more than 2,300 Japanese and U.S. youth have participated in TOMODACHI exchange programs.

These initiatives build on established programs, such as the binational Fulbright Program, which has benefited nearly 10,000 Japanese and U.S. students and scholars over more than 60 years; the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program; the Student Exchange Support Program and the Japanese Government Scholarship provided by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; the National Science Foundation's Summer Institutes in Japan, funded in cooperation with the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science; the Japan-U.S. Training Exchange Program for English Language Teachers (JUSTE); and the Mansfield Fellowship Program. These programs have for years expanded and strengthened people-to-people connections between our countries.

These government programs are complemented by the many non-governmental programs linking the people of our two countries, such as the Japan-America Societies, the U.S.-Japan Council, and the more than 400 sister-city and sister-state and prefecture relationships between Japan and the United States. Such programs are indispensable, as are the dozens of academic associations, university linkages, and privately-funded exchanges, for example the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship; the United States-Japan Bridging Foundation Scholarships, the Grew Bancroft Scholarship; and the Japan-America Student Conference, which celebrates its 80th anniversary this year. Japan and the United States aim to further encourage new and expanded non-governmental

dialogues to bring together opinion leaders from both nations.

Symbolizing the grassroots friendship uniting our nations, the U.S. government and a range of private sector partners have created the Friendship Blossoms Initiative, which is currently planting 3,000 American dogwood trees throughout Japan on behalf of the people of the United States, to reciprocate the City of Tokyo's gift of 3,000 flowering cherry trees to Washington, DC in 1912. The 1912 gift from Japan is celebrated each year during the National Cherry Blossom Festival, an iconic spring event in Washington, D.C.

The President and Prime Minister welcomed the invigoration of exchanges between the U.S. Congress and the Diet of Japan, praising the work of the U.S.-Japan Caucus and the Congressional Study Group on Japan in the United States Congress, the Japan-U.S. Parliamentary Friendship League in the Diet of Japan, as well as the U.S.-Japan Legislative Exchange Program and the Japan-U.S. Senate Inter-parliamentary Conference. Nearly 200 Diet Members visited the United States in fiscal year 2013, and the number of Members of Congress visiting Japan in 2013 more than doubled over the previous year and continues to increase in 2014.

Finally, the United States and Japan note that millions of Japanese and U.S. citizens visit each other's country every year to visit family and friends, enjoy tourist sites and cultural experiences, and conduct the business transactions that underpin the tight economic relationship between two of the world's largest economies. To facilitate this travel, the United States and Japan plan to expedite work to establish a reciprocal arrangement, including through Japan's participation in the U.S. Global Entry program, to streamline border formalities for trusted travelers from both our countries, and to make travel between the United States and Japan easier, faster and more secure.

NOTE: This joint statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 24, but due to the 12-hour time difference between Washington, DC, and Tokyo, Japan, the joint statement carries a release date of April 25. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at a Naturalization Ceremony in Seoul, South Korea
April 25, 2014

Well, good afternoon. *Annyeonghaseyo.* It is an honor to be here at the War Memorial of Korea. In a few moments, I'll lay a wreath to pay tribute to our servicemembers who've given their lives in defense of our freedom. And tomorrow I'll address our troops and civilians at Yongsan Garrison.

I have said before, I have no higher honor than serving as your Commander in Chief. And today I can think of no higher privilege than being here with all of you and your families for this special moment: becoming the newest citizens of the world's oldest constitutional democracy.

I know that each of you have traveled your own path to this moment. You come from 14 different countries. Some of you have called Seoul home. But a day came when each one of you did something extraordinary: Thirteen of you made the profound decision to put on the uniform of a country that was not yet fully your own; seven of you married an American soldier, and as a military spouse, that means you've been serving our country too.

If there's anything that this should teach us, it's that Americans is strengthened by our immigrants. I had the chance to talk to our Ambassador and our commander here, and I said to them that there's no greater strength, no greater essence of America, than the fact that we attract people from all around the world who want to be part of our democracy. We are a nation of immigrants, people from every corner, every walk of life, who picked up tools to help build our country, who started up busi-

nesses to advance our country, who took up arms to defend our country.

What makes us Americans is something more than just the circumstances of birth, what we look like, what God we worship; rather, it is a joyful spirit of citizenship. And citizenship demands participation and responsibility and service to our country and to one another. And few embody that more than our men and women in uniform.

If we want to keep attracting the best and the brightest, the smartest and most selfless the world has to offer, then we have to keep this in mind: the value of our immigrants to our way of life. It is central to who we are; it's in our DNA. It's part of our creed. And that means moving forward we've got to fix our broken immigration system and pass commonsense immigration reform.

This is a huge advantage to us, the talent that we attract. We don't want to make it harder, we want to make it more sensible, more efficient. That's why I'm going to keep on pushing to get this done this year so that others like the young men and women here have the opportunity to join our American family and serve our great Nation.

Today I'm thrilled that, in a few moments, I'll get to call each of you my fellow Americans. I am so proud to be sharing this stage with you today. Congratulations. But I don't want to talk too long, because I'm not the main event. Thank you very much for your service.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:28 p.m. at the War Memorial of Korea. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Kim Y. Sung; and Gen. C. Michael Scaparrotti, commander, U.S. Forces Korea.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Park Geun-hye of South Korea in Seoul

April 25, 2014

President Obama. I would like to thank President Park for welcoming me here today. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to come back to the Republic of Korea. But I am very mindful that my visit comes at a time of deep mourning for the people of this nation, and I know that President Park and the South Korean Government are focused on responding to the tragedy of the ferry *Sewol*.

In our press conference later, President Park and I will have the opportunity to address a range of issues that we'll be discussing here today. But for now, I just wanted to express, on behalf of the American people, our deepest sympathies for the incredible and tragic loss that's taken place. As allies, but also as friends, we join you in mourning the lost and the missing and especially so many young people, students who represented the vitality and the future of this nation.

So, President Park, I thought that it would be appropriate and fitting for us to begin today by honoring the lost and the missing. And our delegation, out of respect, would appreciate the opportunity to join together in a moment of silence.

[*At this point, a moment of silence was observed.*]

President Park. Mr. President, thank you so much for making this proposal to hold a moment of silence for the victims of the ferry *Sewol*. Right after the tragic accident, you personally expressed your condolences and your sympathies, and you were unsparing in providing active U.S. assistance, including the dispatch of salvage vessels. The Korean people draw great strength and courage from your kindness.

Just as the American people were able to rally together in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks and were able to prevail over difficult times, so too, I am sure that Korean people will, in fact, pull through this moment of crisis and be able to achieve the renewal of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. President, my sincere welcome to you once again on your visit to Korea, and may our summit meeting today kick off the next 60 years and produce very meaningful results that allow us to do so.

President Obama. Well, thank you, President Park. The Republic of Korea is our—one of our strongest allies in the world. I'm looking forward to our discussion and to reaffirming America's unshakeable commitment to South Korea and its security.

One last point I wanted to make: I have with me this American flag that I believe our protocol people have. In the United States, we have a tradition. After the loss of our servicemembers and veterans, we present a flag in their honor to their loved ones. This flag was flown over the White House the same day as the sinking of the *Sewol*. And in that spirit, I'm presenting this American flag to you and the people of the Republic of Korea on behalf of the American people. It reflects our deep condolences, but also our solidarity with you during this difficult time and our great pride in calling you an ally and a friend.

President Park. Mr. President, thank you so much again for sharing in our sorrow, the sorrow of the Korean people as well as the bereaved families, and for your gracious gesture.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:21 p.m. at the Blue House. President Park spoke in Korean, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks With President Park Geun-hye of South Korea on the Return of South Korean Cultural Artifacts in Seoul
April 25, 2014

President Obama. So we just had an excellent meeting, and I know that we'll have the opportunity to answer questions from the press about policy. But I just wanted to make a brief remark about these remarkable artifacts.

These are historic seals that were part of the monarchy here in Korea. And during the Korean war, a marine from the United States found them and took them back as mementos to the United States. And I don't think he fully appreciated the historic significance of them.

After his passing, his widow discovered how important they were, and she graciously recognized that they appropriately belonged here in Korea. So she facilitated the return, and I wanted to just let the Korean people know that they're back where they belong. And this is a symbol, hopefully, of the respect that we have for Korean culture and our friendship. And they're very beautiful.

President Park. It's very significant that we were able to return home these very historic and precious artifacts. And I do wish to thank President Obama, as well as the American people, for this gesture.

This event is really the fruits of the close consultations and collaboration that our two countries have been undertaking since late last year. And I do wish to acknowledge all the hard work of the officials—the relevant officials at the Department of Homeland Security as well as other related agencies—for their hard work.

I also understand that later this year, we're preparing to adopt an MOU with regard to the return of cultural artifacts, and preparations are currently underway to do so. And I believe the event can further catalyze collaboration in terms and with regard to cultural heritage. Once again, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and the American Government for this wonderful present.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:49 p.m. at the Blue House. President Park spoke in Korean, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's News Conference With President Park Geun-hye of South Korea in Seoul

April 25, 2014

Moderator. Ladies and gentlemen, we will now commence the joint press conference by President Obama and President Park Geun-hye. The joint press conference will begin with the opening statements by two head of the states, followed by Q&A session. First, President Park Geun-hye will deliver the statement.

President Park. I'd like to extend my sincere welcome to His Excellency President Obama. To the victims of the sunken ferry ship *Sewol* and their families, President Obama expressed consolation and sympathy and provided support. I truly thank you from the bottom of my heart. This is being simultaneously translated.

President Obama's visit to Korea is the fourth time, and Seoul is the city he most frequently visited during his term. Of all the U.S. Presidents, the number of his visits to Korea outnumbered that of his predecessors. This reflects President Obama's special interest on Korea and full commitment and confidence to further strengthen U.S.-R.O.K. alliance.

Most recent North Korea's provocation is a public announcement on possibility of engaging another nuclear test, thereby imposing threats and provocation. Amidst the situation, President Obama's visit to Korea sends a strong message to North Korea that its provocative acts cannot be tolerated. President Obama and I will spare no effort to exercise deterrence against North Korea's provocation and strengthen our mutual cooperation.

Above all, faced with the D.P.R.K.'s threat, the U.S.-R.O.K.'s defense capabilities is solid and will be further cemented. Tomorrow President Obama and I will jointly visit R.O.K.-U.S. Combined Forces Command for the first time ever since it was formed in 1978 to reaffirm U.S.-R.O.K.'s deterrence capabilities against D.P.R.K. D.P.R.K.'s so-called new pattern of provocation will bring about new levels of international pressure.

We also exchanged views on what measures Korea and the U.S. need to take jointly, together with the international communities, in the face of the D.P.R.K.'s provocation. We sincerely hope that North Korea takes the course toward peace and stability while make a right choice to resolve the stress and hardship that North Koreans undergo.

We considered that the security environment is experiencing threats imposed by D.P.R.K.'s nuclear program and missile activities. Therefore, we shared the view that the timing and condition of the OPCON transfer slated for 2015 can be reviewed. We also agreed to beef up our capacities to effectively deal with D.P.R.K.'s nuclear and missile threats. As a part of that effort, Korea's air and missile defense, KAMD, will be developed into an independent system and will collaborate to enhance KAMD's interoperability while securing its efficient operation.

The vital foundation of our alliance is high-level security dialogue, which we plan to further reinforce. In the later part of this year, two-plus-two Defense and Foreign Affairs Ministers talk is scheduled. We expect the talks will be meaningful opportunity to discuss current issues, visions of our alliance, present and future, of the Korean Peninsula.

Based on strong deterrence capabilities of R.O.K. and the U.S., we decided to lay the groundwork for sustainable peace and peaceful unification and make joint efforts to build new Korean Peninsula. To realize that, it is crucial to achieve progress in D.P.R.K.'s denuclearization. We share the concern over D.P.R.K.'s continuous attempt to advance its nuclear capabilities, so with a sense of urgency, we will make progress in the denuclearization. Based on our close coordination, we will continue our efforts to induce consistent response and active cooperation from the international communities, including the five parties.

North Korea's pursuit of two goals at once—on nuclear arsenals and economic development—are incompatible. D.P.R.K. must realize that. And therefore, to lay the groundwork for peaceful unification in the Korean

Peninsula, I explained President Obama my initiative for peaceful unification presented in Dresden last month. In December 2012, as President Obama mentioned in Seoul, residents of both South and North Korea will eventually become free citizens of an integrated country.

Reflecting development process of human history, barriers built due to conflict, distrust, sociocultural differences eventually collapse. During that process, I believe we need to shower constant the North Korean residents with caring interest and deliver message of hope, especially efforts unnecessary to provide humanitarian assistance to North Koreans and recover our common sense of identity.

Peaceful unification in the Korean Peninsula will provide new economic opportunities to its neighboring countries and allies and contribute to promote global peace and stabilities.

Though North Korea regime rejects the initiative I proposed in Dresden, my proposal will assure minimal level of value of life to be enjoyed by North Koreans and recover common sense of identity between North and South Koreans. With that principle in mind, we will pursue the initiative.

President Obama and I share the view that while the tension and conflict persist in Northeast Asian region, we must actively seek ways to promote peace and collaboration in the Northeast Asia. In that context, I strongly support the U.S. policy to rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region as it contributes positively to the regional peace and cooperation. I firmly believe that President Obama's Asia trip demonstrates his strong commitment toward his policy of rebalancing toward the region and his pledge to implement the commitment.

As the U.N. Security Council member, South Korea stands side by side with the U.S. to resolve any major issues undermining peace and stability in the global community. The U.S. and Korea are marching together to carry out development cooperative activities in Asia, Africa, and also poverty fightings. We'll gather our wisdom to tackle new global challenges such as climate change, energy, nuclear security, cybersecurity, marine security, and etcetera.

Another important pillar of our alliance is practical cooperation in economic, social, and cultural sectors. This topic has continued so far and will continue. KORUS FTA will, together with the U.S.-R.O.K. mutual defense treaty, have become two major linchpins of our alliance. We plan to expand mutual, beneficial cooperation based on KORUS FTA.

We share the view that, followed by FTA between the two countries, TPP will enable both of our countries to expand our cooperation in the future. We will closely coordinate with each other regarding Korea's participation in TPP.

Regarding the issue of the energy, scientists from two sides are conducting joint research in the field of IT, high-tech manufacturings, polar regions, space explorations. In these areas, they are closely collaborating further down the road. Energy-related companies and experts from both sides have strengthened cooperation in clean energy and shale gas sectors. Thus, we are stepping up the bilateral partnership to a new level.

Today, after 60 years, precious nine Korean cultural artifacts were returned to Korea. Such social and cultural cooperation between the U.S. and Korea will enrich our friendly ties and achieve further development. Based on the past six decades of unwavering trust built between the two nations, the U.S.-R.O.K. alliance will advance farther as to effectively handle the challenges in the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia and the world. Our alliance will continuously strengthen its role as a linchpin for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and also contribute to the people of the U.S. and Korea and the world.

Once again, welcome to Korea, President Obama, and I wish you a successful Asia trip. Thank you.

Moderator. Next, President Obama will deliver the statement.

President Obama. Well, thank you, President Park, for your kind words and warm welcome. And I want to thank the people of South

Korea for your enduring friendship and unfailing hospitality.

As I said earlier, I know my visit comes at a time of great sorrow for your nation. And again, on behalf of all Americans, I want to express our deepest condolences—our *aedo*—to all the families who lost loved ones on the ferry *Sewol*. So many were young students with their entire lives ahead of them. I'm a father of two daughters of the same age, or close to the same age, as those who were lost, and so I can only imagine what the parents are going through at this point, the incredible heartache.

I brought with me on this trip—in addition to the flag that I mentioned earlier—a magnolia tree from the South Lawn of the White House. These magnolia trees have stood for more than a century, and they represent in our country beauty and, with every spring, renewal—the same qualities embodied by all those students. So during my visit this tree will be presented to Danwon High School as a reminder of their beautiful lives and the friendship between our nations. And going forward, the United States will continue to offer whatever support we can provide as you respond to this tragedy.

These difficult days remind us that, whatever the challenges, our two nations stand together. Our alliance remains a linchpin of security in Asia. Our solidarity is bolstered by the courage of our servicemembers—both Korean and American—who safeguard this nation. America's commitment to the South Korean people will never waver.

And, President Park, I want to thank you for your strong personal commitment to our alliance. I was honored to welcome you to Washington for your first foreign trip as President, and we've worked closely ever since. In our discussions today, we agreed to continue to modernize our alliance, including enhancing the interoperability of our missile defense systems. At the same time, President Park recommended, and I agreed, that given the evolving security environment in the region, including the enduring North Korea nuclear and missile threat, we can reconsider the 2015 timeline for transferring operational control for our alliance. Together, we'll ensure that our alliance remains fully prepared for our mission.

With regard to North Korea, the United States and South Korea stand shoulder to shoulder both in the face of Pyongyang's provocations and in our refusal to accept a nuclear Korea—North Korea. Threats will get North Korea nothing other than greater isolation. And we're united on the steps Pyongyang needs to take, including abandoning their nuclear weapons and ballistic weapons program and living up to their international obligations.

And of course, we're also deeply concerned about the suffering of the North Korean people, and the United States and South Korea are working together to advance accountability for the serious human rights violations being committed by the North.

I mentioned to President Park that the United States supports the Korean people's desire for unification, and I share President Park's vision—as you outlined, Madam President, in your recent speech in Dresden—of "a unified Korea that's free from the fear of war and nuclear weapons." It's a vision of a unified Korea where people throughout this peninsula enjoy the political and economic freedoms that exist here in the South.

Beyond this peninsula, our alliance is increasingly a global one. We're grateful for South Korea's partnership, from typhoon relief in the Philippines to humanitarian efforts in Syria. As Madam President mentioned, we're working closely on new clean energy technologies to address climate change and with the international community on an ambitious new climate agreement. Around the globe, we're leaders in development, because we want more people to experience the kind of incredible growth and progress that South Korea shows is possible.

And finally, we agreed to continue expanding our extraordinary economic ties. Since we signed our free trade agreement 2 years ago, our overall bilateral trade has gone up. The United States is exporting more to South Korea, and South Korea is exporting more to the United States, which supports good jobs in both countries. Today President Park and I

discussed how we can make sure that we implement KORUS fully, which would also help ensure that South Korea can eventually meet the high standards of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

So, President Park, thank you again for your partnership and for all that you've done to keep our alliance strong. I'm looking forward to our working dinner tonight. Time and again, we've seen how much our people can accomplish together, not just for our own countries, but for the security and prosperity of the people around the world. And we very much appreciate your leadership on that project.

Kamsahamnida.

Moderator. [*Inaudible*]—first from the Korean side. Please state your name and affiliation before you pose your question. Please go ahead, Mr.—[*inaudible*].

Q. My name is—[*inaudible*]—of SBS. I have a question for President Park. Madam President, last month at Dresden, Germany, you have announced your unification initiative centering around the three main proposals for laying the groundwork for peace and unification, but North Korea flatly rejected it and has continued with its threats of provocation. In particular, North Korea is showing signs for an attempt at the fourth nuclear test against this backdrop. The two leaders said that there will be—at their opening statements—strong sanctions and against—posed against North Korea by the international society, and they will not—the two countries will not tolerate a nuclear test.

I would like to know what the President's evaluation is. Is there a possibility of North Korea actually carrying out the nuclear test? And if the provocations continue, if you are to improve and move forward in the Korean relations, are you considering a more flexible measure to be taken against the North?

Nextly, with regards to the U.S.-Korea transfer of the wartime command or the OPCON, the two leaders have said that they will review the timing and conditions for transfer. And if the transfer schedule is pushed back again, have you discussed with the President Obama specifically on when that timing will be?

President Park. Yes. At the Korean Government and also at the Defense Ministry, our assessment is that the North Korea is actually fully ready to carry out the fourth nuclear test, so it can actually carry out the test whenever it deems necessary. That is our assessment. We're not very certain of what the timing will be, but I think we believe that they are fully ready now.

And this is a very tense situation. To come up with some flexible measure—that is your question—actually, the Dresden initiative is a case in point for a win-win of the two Koreas and for improvement of the quality of life for the North Korean residents. It's indeed a flexible policy. But the North Korea is responding with threats of provocation and about carrying out North Korea—to carry out nuclear tests. So this is a point that we really need to think seriously.

With regards to the transfer of the OPCON, Korea and the United States have decided that the basic direction should be to strengthen the KORUS, combine the defensive posture. We believe that it should not incur any negative situations on the defense posture for the Korea. And therefore, against the heightening tensions of the threats currently, the timing is 2015. But we have agreed that we could revisit this issue about reviewing the timing and conditions for transfer.

So, currently, I don't think it is quite appropriate that I give you exact timing or the conditions. But the authorities—the defense authorities of the two countries—will be able to come to a coordination effort together, and that was what we will do to encourage the defense authorities to move forward.

Ukraine/International Sanctions Against Russia/Arab-Israeli Peace Process

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, Madam President. Mr. President, you have stated that you're teeing up sanctions on Russia, but the Europeans are divided on how far they want to go. Can you tell us what, if any, consultations you plan to have with European leaders to nudge them forward? And are you worried that this could delay the process? Also, Mr. Presi-

dent, at a time when your attention is needed on the Ukraine and other world crises, is it now time to throw in the towel on the Middle East peace effort, especially now that the—that Israel has dropped out of the talks?

I also have a question for you, Madam President. Condolences on your country's tragic loss. Madam President, given that South Korea and Japan have important shared security interests in the region, what, if anything, can your Government do to get past this ritual of bitter dispute over Japan's World War II militarist past? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, with respect to Ukraine, the consultation with my European counterparts has been constant, not just over the last several weeks, but for the last several months. And I have been deeply encouraged by the unity that you've seen between the United States, Europe, Canada, and many countries around the globe uniformly condemning Russia's actions in annexing Crimea, uniformly condemning Russian further meddling in Ukraine and the destabilizing activities that are taking place in the south and the east.

And both the Europeans and the United States have been consistent in calibrating sanctions that could provide a deterrent to the Russians, providing support to the Ukrainians, leaving open a path for resolving this problem diplomatically.

Now, as I said yesterday, what we've seen since the Geneva agreement is the Ukrainian Government has been carrying out the terms of that agreement. It's introduced legislation providing amnesty to those that would lay down arms and exit from these government buildings that have been occupied. It has put forward a process for constitutional reform that ensures the rights of all Ukrainians. And it's a credible document, one that's been presented to the Council of Europe and is getting input throughout Ukraine as well as from experts outside of Ukraine on constitutional reform. And so what you've seen is the Government in Kiev doing what it said it would do. What we have not seen is Russia speaking out clearly that—and condemning the proRussian militias that have taken over these buildings and using its influence to deescalate the crisis.

So I'll be talking to the Europeans—not all of them, but some key European leaders—again this evening, making sure that they share my assessment in terms of what's happened since the Geneva talks took place. As I said yesterday, we already have a series of additional targeted sanctions that are ready to go, and we want to make sure that we're consulting with them, assuming that we don't see any drastic changes in behavior on the part of the Russians. We'd like to see that, but we haven't assumed that.

But what's also important is laying the groundwork so that if and when we see even greater escalation, perhaps even military incursion by Russia into Ukraine, that we're prepared for the sort of sectoral sanctions that would have even larger consequences.

And one thing I should say about European leadership: They've been unequivocal in condemning Russia, and they have actually moved steadily when it comes to applying sanctions and consequences towards Russia. But there are a lot of countries inside of Europe, and they have a whole process that they've got to go through to deal with any actions that have significant impact on their own economies. And so there's some variation inside of Europe. That is as much of an issue as it is any differences between our assessments and theirs. And we want to work with them to make sure that we're coordinating as much as possible because that's going to maximize our efforts.

Last point: I think it's important for us not to anticipate that the targeted sanctions that we're applying now necessarily solve the problem. What we've been trying to do is to continually raise the costs for Russia of their actions while still leaving the possibility of them moving in a different direction. And we've—we'll continue to keep some arrows in our quiver in the event that we see a further deterioration of the situation over the next several days or weeks.

As far as the Middle East is concerned, this is a problem that's been going on for 60, 70, 80 years. We didn't anticipate that we were going

to solve it during the course of a 6- or 9-month negotiation. I think it's fair to say that one of my jobs as President is to worry about a bunch of different problems at the same time and not just pick and choose which problems that I have the luxury to worry about.

It is still in America's interests as well as Israel's interests and the interests of the Palestinian people to see if we can resolve a conflict that is combustible. And so far, at least, what we've seen is some movement on both sides to acknowledge that this is a crisis long running that needs to be solved. What we haven't seen is, frankly, the kind of political will to actually make tough decisions. And that's been true on both sides.

And the fact that most recently President Abbas took the unhelpful step of rejoining talks with Hamas is just one of a series of choices that both the Israelis and the Palestinians have made that are not conductive to trying to resolve this crisis. And I make no apologies for supporting Secretary of State Kerry's efforts—tireless efforts—despite long odds, to keep on trying to bring the parties together.

There may come a point at which there just needs to be a pause and both sides need to look at the alternatives. As I've said in the past—and I will continue to repeat—nobody has offered me a serious scenario in which peace is not made between Israelis and Palestinians and we have a secure, democratic Jewish State of Israel and the Palestinians have a state. Folks can posture, folks can cling to maximalist positions, but realistically, there's one door, and that is the two parties getting together and making some very difficult political compromises in order to secure the future of both Israelis and Palestinians for future generations.

We have not yet seen them walk through that door. We will continue to encourage them to walk through that door. Do I expect that they will walk through that door next week, next month, or even in the course of the next 6 months? No. Are we going to continue to try to offer constructive approaches that could lead them to go ahead and take those steps? Absolutely. And I make no apologies for that. It's the right thing to do. It's important, and it's in America's national interests as well as the interests of the region and the interests of Israel.

President Park. When it comes to Korea and Japan, there are a number of shared interests amongst the two countries. However, there has been some conflict going on between the two countries because of historical views. And your question is how we are going to resolve those differences.

I'd like to first begin by extending appreciation to you for expressing condolences to the victims of the *Sewol* ferry.

On this issue, at The Hague, we had a trilateral Korea-U.S.-Japan summit meeting. So I think my talk can begin from the trilateral summit meeting. The United States, particularly President Obama, has exerted a lot of efforts for the trilateral summit to be realized in Hague. And at that summit meeting, the three countries have come to an agreement that will be coordinated efforts for resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

However, I'd like to say that before we had this trilateral summit meeting, what the Japanese leader has done, the commitment that he has made—I'd like to trace the talks back to the—[*inaudible*]—dialogue or the—[*inaudible*]—dialogue—the leader has said that he will faithfully abide by those two dialogues—[*inaudible*]—dialogues and that there will be some effort for resolution of the issues related to the Korean comfort women victims. And since there has been some consensus reached, we should make sure that we do not lose that momentum and carry forward to make progress from there.

So I think what is most important is that we go back to the pledges made by Prime Minister Abe and their truthful actions be implemented from the Japan side. That is very important. And for the comfort women issue, for the victims—Korean victims—at the director general level at the Ministry of Finance—Foreign Affairs, excuse me, there will be further consultations. We hope that there will be talks carried out at that director general meeting and that there will be like truthfulness displayed by the Japanese side so that we can carry on the mo-

mentum for cooperation. And if we're not able to achieve much progress as we anticipated at that moment, we won't be able to carry on, to move—make progress from the momentum that we were able to realize at that time.

With regards to the Korean comfort women victims, many have passed away, and we only have 55 remaining survivors. And I think it's very important that we come up with efforts, truthful efforts for these victims, because if we let go of this—we do not make progress in the near future—we won't be able to do anything about those victims. And therefore, by implementing truthful actions based on those commitments that we have made, we'll be able to make progress with the momentum that we were able to achieve at the time. However important the coordinated efforts will be between those—our three countries, I think efforts should be exerted by all the parties concerned. And it cannot be—progress cannot be achieved by efforts of a single party. And therefore, in this regard, I really look forward to efforts made by the Japanese side.

Moderator. Yes, Mr.—[*inaudible*]—please go ahead.

North Korea/U.S. Policy in East Asia/East China Sea Maritime Territorial Disputes/China-U.S. Relations/Japan-South Korea Relations

Q. My name is—[*inaudible*]. I have questions for President Obama. Despite numerous warnings from the international community, North Korea is continuing with threats and provocation. And because of the new developments of Ukraine, there are voices of concern about the possibility that U.S. attention is going to be diverted to Europe and that the North Korean nuclear issue is going to go down in the U.S. foreign policy priority list. I'd like to know what your ideas for—are for resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. And for resumption of the six-party talks, I'd like to know if you're considering relaxing of the preconditions you set for resumption of the talks.

And nextly, I'd like to talk about some conflicts going on in Northeast Asia. Korea, Japan, and China are the three countries in Northeast Asia that engage in close political and economic cooperation; in reality, they are mired in historical and territorial disputes. If you were to foster a friendly atmosphere for cooperation, what can the United States do? And with regards to Prime Minister Abe's statement at the press conference yesterday, he has made statements justifying the visit of—to Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese political leaders. I'd like to know your views over the historical views held by Japanese politicians.

President Obama. Well, as I said earlier in response to one of your American counterparts' questions, the United States and I don't have the luxury of choosing just one problem at a time. So the North Korea situation is of direct concern to us, not only because it threatens our key allies in the region, the Republic of Korea and Japan, but it also poses a direct threat to us. Some of the missile technology that's being developed, the nuclear weapons that are being developed in North Korea, when matched up with a thoroughly irresponsible foreign policy and a provocative approach by the North Korean regime, poses a threat to the United States. And so we can't waver in our attention. We have to make sure that in strong concert with our allies, that we are continuing to press on North Korea to change its approach.

Now, in terms of what the United States believes is going to be most effective, we've been very consistent over the last 5 years. We don't reward bad behavior. We don't go through a constant cycle in which provocative actions by North Korea result in dialogue that leads nowhere and concessions to the North Koreans.

And we have also been consistent in saying that if North Korea is serious about talks, here are the specific steps that we can begin to take. Denuclearization has to be on the table. There has to be a discussion about how we are going to remove a key threat not only to the region, but also to the world, because North Korea is also one of the principal proliferators of dangerous weapons around the world.

So far, at least, we have not gotten a positive response from North Korea on that front. What's been encouraging is the degree to which China—partly because of consultations

with President Xi and Madam President Park, conversations between myself and President Xi and others—China is beginning to recognize that North Korea is not just a nuisance, this is a significant problem to their own security. And we've encouraged them to exert greater influence over North Korea because China has the most significant effect on North Korean calculations.

President Park and I agree that in light of what we expect to be further provocative actions from the North Koreans, whether in the form of long-range missile tests or nuclear tests or both, that it's important for us to look at additional ways to apply pressure on North Korea, further sanctions that have even more bite, as well as highlighting some of the human rights violations that make North Korea probably the worst human rights violator in the world.

It is also important for us to recognize, however, that North Korea is already the most isolated country in the world by far. Its people suffer terribly because of the decisions that its leaders have made. And we are not going to find a magic bullet that solves this problem overnight. What we're going to have to do is to continue with a consistent, steady approach. And the single most important thing is making sure that there's strong unity of effort between ourselves, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and other like-minded countries in the region. We have to present a strong, forceful alliance, and we have to prepare for any eventuality, while still opening the prospect for a negotiated resolution to this longstanding conflict.

With respect to some of the other issues in East Asia, the United States position has been clear and consistent throughout. We consider ourselves a Asia-Pacific power. We don't have a stake in the specific claims that have caused some of these disputes. We're not parties to the disputes over the Senkaku Islands, for example. Our primary interest is making sure that international norms and rule of law are upheld and that disputes of this sort are resolved through peaceful, diplomatic means. And we will continue to encourage all the parties concerned—whether it's Japan, China, Republic of Korea, or with respect to disputes in the South China Sea—to use the law and diplomacy to resolve these disputes.

And my message to China has consistently been that although clearly there are going to be differences between ourselves and China on certain issues, there are also enormous areas of cooperation. We're not interesting in containing China. We're interested in China's peaceful rise and it being a responsible and powerful proponent of rule of law in an international system. In that role, it has to abide by certain norms. Large countries have to abide by rules, perhaps even more than small countries, because when we don't, it's—worries people. And we want to move away from a system in which might alone makes right.

So we'll continue to encourage all parties concerned to take steps to resort to international norms and rule of law. We've been encouraging ASEAN and China, for example, to come up with a code of conduct that can resolve some of these maritime disputes. We will make sure that freedom of navigation and other principles that have underwritten the prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the growth in trade and commerce of this region continue, and we'll continue to project ourselves in the Pacific to ensure that that continues.

Finally, with respect to the historical tensions between South Korea and Japan, I think that any of us who look back on the history of what happened to the comfort women here in South Korea, for example, have to recognize that this was a terrible, egregious violation of human rights. Those women were violated in ways that, even in the midst of war, was shocking. And they deserve to be heard, they deserve to be respected, and there should be an accurate and clear account of what happened.

I think Prime Minister Abe recognizes, and certainly, the Japanese people recognize, that the past is something that has to be recognized honestly and fairly. But I also think that it is in the interests of both Japan and the Korean people to look forward as well as backwards and to find ways in which the heartache and the pain of the past can be resolved, because, as has been said before, the interests today of

the Korean and Japanese people so clearly converge. You're both democracies. You both have thriving free markets. You both are cornerstones of a booming economic region. You both are strong allies and friends of the United States. And so when you think about the young people of the Republic of Korea and Japan, my hope would be that we can honestly resolve some of these past tensions, but also keep our eye on the future and the possibilities of peace and prosperity for all people.

That's one of the most important lessons, I think, from the horrors of war, is being able to look back and learn lessons that allow people to avoid war in the future.

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Russia-U.S. Relations/Ukraine

Q. Jonathan Karl, ABC News. Madam President, thank you. Mr. President, thank you. It wasn't that long ago you were talking about a reset with Russia and were optimistic that relations with Vladimir Putin could be dramatically improved. Did you misjudge him, or did he mislead you? And at this point, isn't it clear that sanctions simply are not going to change his behavior? And just a personal relations question: I'm sure you saw, President Putin was asked that if he were drowning, would you save him? And he said he thought you would save him. So I'm just wondering, was he correct on that? And do you think that Putin would save you? [*Laughter*]

And to President Park, in light of the fact that, as President Obama points out, North Korea is already the most isolated country on the planet, the most sanctioned country, what do you think should be done specifically if they go through with another nuclear test?

President Obama. First of all, I absolutely would save Mr. Putin if he were drowning. I'd like to think that if anybody is out there drowning, I'm going to save them. I used to be a pretty good swimmer. I grew up in Hawaii. [*Laughter*] A little out of practice.

Keep in mind that, when I came into office, the idea of reset was a recognition that there were a range of issues in which U.S. and Russian interests converged. It was in our national security interests to try to foster cooperation with the Russians so that, for example, we could have alternative supply lines to our troops in Afghanistan; so that we could obtain cooperation from Russia in applying sanctions to Iran and forcing them to the table to see if we could resolve that issue peacefully. And in fact, during the first term of my administration, the approach we took resulted in concrete benefits to the national security posture of the United States. We were able to reduce weapons of mass destruction. We were able to make sure that our troops were adequately supplied in Afghanistan at times, as you'll recall, when there were some tensions within Pakistan after we conducted the raid against bin Laden in Abbottabad. We were able to bring Iran to the table, and we now have what so far, at least, have been constructive discussions about resolving the nuclear problem there.

So those were all things that were good for us, and I believe they were actually good for the Russians as well. Mr. Putin, in my second term, has had an increasing tendency to view the world through a cold war prism and to see Russia's interests as invariably in conflict with the West's. I disagree with him in my assessment of what's in Russia's interests, but he's the President of that country. There are still areas that we should be cooperating—on counterterrorism, for example. But his decisions recently—first, with respect to supporting the horrendous bloodshed carried out by the Asad regime in Syria, and then, most clearly, with respect to the situation in Ukraine—makes it much more difficult for us to cooperate. And I suspect that that's going to linger for some time to come.

We'll continue to look for areas where, if it's in our national security interests, and they think it's in their interests, that we'll try to find areas where we can work together. But the violations of sovereignty and territorial integrity in Ukraine is a principle that the United States has to stand up to.

Now, with respect to the impact of sanctions, Russia has a deep interest in what happens in Ukraine, and I think they're going about meeting those interests in entirely the

wrong way. But what's clear is—you're right—Mr. Putin is going to make decisions based on what he thinks is best for Russia, and he views Ukraine as absolutely central, critical to his foreign policy and the long-term strategic interests of Russia.

That doesn't mean that he doesn't take into account other long-term interests of Russia. Tens of billions of dollars of capital fleeing Russia poses a problem for Russia's long-term interests. Russia being isolated so that no business man or woman with any sense are going to want to invest there. That's a problem for Russia's long-term interests. And President Putin is not a stupid man and, I think, recently acknowledged that this has already had an impact. And certainly if the situation gets worse and sanctions are broadened to an entire sector, that will have a more severe impact on the Russian people and the Russian economy.

And so there's going to come a point at which he's got to make a fundamental decision. Is he willing to see the Russian economy that was already weakened, that was already faltering, weaken further because he's unwilling to deal with Ukraine in a diplomatic fashion that respects their sovereignty, but still meets any legitimate interest that Russia may have? Or is he going to use military force and the kind of destabilizing activities that we've seen so far? That's a choice that he's going to have to make. But we shouldn't make the choice easy for him. He should recognize that the international community as a whole is not going to encourage the kinds of actions that he's taken so far.

Q. But you acknowledge sanctions basically have not changed the behavior?

President Obama. Well, Jonathan, I think that's self-apparent. I think that there are no guarantees in life generally and certainly no guarantees in foreign policy.

One of the things that I think has been interesting during this entire discussion—and we've seen this on a lot of foreign policy issues over the last several years—we seem to have gotten in the habit of thinking that when there are hard foreign policy problems, that there may actually be a definitive answer. Typically, those who offer that definitive answer come up with the use of force as the definitive answer. You would think, given that we've just gone through a decade of war, that that assumption would be subject to some questioning. Certainly, in my position as President of the United States and as a student of history, very rarely have I seen the exercise of military power providing a definitive answer either.

So you've got some tools in the toolbox; you try to figure out which ones have the best chance of working. Sometimes, it's going to take time to see whether or not a particular approach worked or not. You may not know until after the fact. But what I do know is, is that sanctions have consequences on Russia and that if Mr. Putin were primarily interested in making sure that Russia is a strong, thriving nation for years to come, then he's a lot better off abiding by the agreement that we came up with in Geneva; resolving the situation in Ukraine peacefully; allowing Ukrainians to make their own decisions about their lives so that they can have good relations both with Russia and with Europe; and businesses can continue to have confidence that if they invest in Russia or have economic relations with Russia; or Europeans can have confidence with respect to energy that they purchase from Russia, that it's not going to be suddenly disrupted because of some Russian territorial ambitions that violate international law. Good? [*Inaudible*]—can't remember what the other question was. [*Laughter*]

President Park. Yes, that was a long statement, I must say. So going back to the question posed to me, when North Korea—nuclear test is actually carried out by North Korea, what will the Korean Government do? That is the question, if I remember it correctly. Now, if North Korea is actually going to carry out the fourth nuclear test, that is going to change—fundamentally change—the Northeast Asian security landscape, and I believe that all our efforts to resolve the nuclear issue through six-party talks is going to be completely dissolved. It's going to go in the air.

We tried to resolve the problem through dialogue, but what North Korea did was to buy time to upgrade its nuclear capability. And now

with this upgraded nuclear capability, North Korea is not willing to listen to anyone. If this is going to be the situation, there's no actual meaning in us carrying out six-party talks. And to the neighboring countries, there may be an arms—nuclear arms race triggering. So there's actually no stopping—for other neighboring countries, North Korea is not stopped. And South and North Korea has tried to improve relationship, but I think we're going to lose the momentum for the South Korean efforts to improve that relationship if the North Korean nuclear test is going to take place.

And also, there is a close linkage between North Korean nuclear program and others, so I believe that North Korea's nuclear capability is going to bring a serious threat to world peace too. And against the backdrop of such analysis, I believe this is not going to be a problem only for the Northeast Asian region, this is going to be a serious threat to the global peace. And if such an event is going to be realized, the U.N., in order to uphold the peace, will have to impose very strong sanctions.

That is my view. And I also believe that there is a strong role to be played by China. I'd like to emphasize the role of China. China, with regards to possession of North Korea's nuclear capabilities, of their testing, North Korea has strongly opposed to the idea, and it has also maintained a very strong position for the U.N. sanctions. So if against a very bad situation, if China is going to maintain a very strong position, take very strong measures to make sure that North Korea—China will not tolerate the situation, then it's going to be very important. The trade relations, about 90 percent of trade relations and about 80 percent of economic support is going from China to North Korea, and therefore, China's influence in North Korea is indeed huge.

And against this very dangerous situation, I really look forward to China's leading role in making sure that the threat is not going to be translated into action. That is my hope.

Moderator. Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam President, Mr. President, members of the press entourage and international press corps. This concludes entirely the press conference. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 6:15 p.m. at the Blue House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority; President Xi Jinping of China; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. President Park referred to Minister of National Defense Kim Kwan-jin and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yun Byung-se of South Korea. President Park and some reporters spoke in Korean, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's Weekly Address
April 26, 2014

Hi, everybody. In my State of the Union Address, I talked about pizza. [*Laughter*] More specifically, I talked about a pizza chain in Minneapolis, Punch Pizza, whose owner, John Soranno, made the business decision to give his employees a raise to 10 bucks an hour.

A couple of weeks ago, I got a letter from a small-business owner who watched that night. Yasmin Ibrahim is an immigrant who owns her own restaurant, Desi Shack, and plans to open another this summer.

Here's what she wrote: "I was moved by John Soranno's story. It got me thinking about my . . . full-time employees and their ability to survive on $8 an hour in New York City." So a few weeks ago, Yasmin put in place a plan to lift wages for her employees at both her restaurants to at least $10 an hour by the end of this year.

But here's the thing. Yasmin isn't just raising her employees' wages because it's the right thing to do. She's doing it for the same reason John Soranno did: It makes good business sense.

Yasmin wrote: "It will allow us to attract and retain better talent—improving customer experience, reducing employee churn and training costs. We believe doing so makes good

business sense while at the same time having a positive impact on the community." Yasmin's right. That's why, 2 months ago, I issued an Executive order requiring workers on new Federal contracts to be paid a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour.

But in order to make a difference for every American, Congress needs to do something, and America knows it. Right now there's a bill that would boost America's minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. That would lift wages for nearly 28 million Americans across the country—28 million. And we're not just talking about young people on their first job. The average minimum wage worker is 35 years old. They work hard, often in physically demanding jobs.

And while not all of us always see eye to eye politically, one thing we overwhelmingly agree on is that nobody who works full time should ever have to live in poverty. That's why nearly three in four Americans support raising the minimum wage. The problem is, Republicans in Congress don't support raising the minimum wage. Some even want to get rid of it entirely. In Oklahoma, for example, the Republican Governor just signed a law prohibiting cities from establishing their own minimum wage.

That's why this fight is so important. That's why people like John and Yasmin are giving their workers a raise. That's why several States, counties, and cities are going around Congress to raise their workers' wages. That's why I'll keep up this fight. Because we know that our economy as a whole works best when it works for all of us, not just a fortunate few. We believe we do better when everyone who works hard has a chance to get ahead. That's what opportunity is all about.

And if you agree with us, we could use your help. Republicans have voted more than 50 times to undermine or repeal health care for millions of Americans. They should vote at least once to raise the minimum wage for millions of working families. If a Republican in Congress represents you, tell him or her it's time to give the politics a rest for a while and do something to help working Americans. It's time for "10–10." It's time to give America a raise.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:55 a.m. on April 18 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on April 26. In the address, the President referred to Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 25, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on April 26.

Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion With Business Executives in Seoul, South Korea

April 26, 2014

All right. Well, I want to thank Jim Kim and the American Chamber of Commerce in Korea for hosting us. And I'm very pleased to be meeting with these business leaders, both Korean and American, who have been in discussions with Michael Froman, our Ambassador for trade, as well as Caroline Atkinson, who is one of my senior advisers on international economics, because what we want to do is to underscore the fact that, as important as the security relationship and the alliance is between the Republic of Korea and the United States, what is also important is the incredible and growing economic ties that are creating jobs and opportunity in both countries.

I said yesterday with President Park that under the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, our trade has increased. These business leaders know concretely what this means. American companies are exporting more to Korea; Korean companies are exporting more to the United States. So it's a win-win for both countries.

We also know that we still have some more work to do to fully implement the trade agreement and make sure that we're maximizing its

benefits, that our companies can compete fairly in areas like autos and IT and organic foods. And I discussed this with President Park last night. We both agreed that these are issues we can work through together. And given South Korea's interest in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, fully implementing KORUS also is the single most important step that South Korea can take now to show that it's prepared to eventually meet the high standards of TPP.

And finally, we are joined by some outstanding Korean companies that are already invested in the United States, and we want to thank them for their investments and the jobs that they're creating back home.

I just want to remind companies around the world that if you are looking for a great place to set up shop, come to the United States. We've got outstanding workers, great universities, incredible productivity, great energy sources, and a pretty big consumer market, last I checked. And you're also going to have a White House and Federal Government that—working with State and local governments, who are absolutely committed to making it easier for companies to invest in the United States. And whether it's high skills that you're looking for or productivity, our open economy, research and development, innovation, I think more and more companies realize it makes sense to locate in the U.S. And with our SelectUSA initiative, we're making it easier to invest.

So I just wanted to thank these leaders. With that, I'm going to actually spend most of my time listening, but I look forward to all the suggestions or recommendations that are being provided by both the Korean and the U.S. business leaders, because I'm confident that this is going to be one of the key economic relationships of the 21st century.

All right. Thank you so much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:11 a.m. at the Grand Hyatt Seoul hotel.

Remarks to United States Troops and Embassy Personnel at United States Army Garrison Yongsan in Seoul
April 26, 2014

The President. Hey! Thank you. Well, hello, Yongsan! It is——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Hey, who—[*laughter*]. It is good to be back at the Yongsan Garrison. I want to thank one of our military's most tested, trusted leaders for that outstanding introduction—General Mike Scaparrotti. Now, I've been told—I don't know if you've heard this story—that, years ago, Scap was actually an extra in a movie about the Battle of Inchon, the turning point of the Korean war. So it's only fitting that after a career of proud service that's taken him from West Point to Iraq, to Afghanistan, he is now commander of U.S. Forces Korea. And we could not be prouder of his effort.

He's got a great partner in our other representative, Ambassador Kim, a proud Korean American, for strengthening the rock-solid alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea. Give Ambassador Kim a big round of applause.

All of you have helped keep this alliance the linchpin of security and stability in the Asia-Pacific. The Eighth Army is in the house.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. The Seventh Air Force is in the house.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. U.S. Naval Forces Korea.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. U.S. Marine Forces Korea.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Special Operations Command.

Audience members. Hooah!

We've got our standing DOD civilians. And we have our wonderful U.S. Embassy staff are here as well.

Audience member. And the VA!

The President. Yes, good job, VA—in the house! [*Laughter*]

And I know we've got some outstanding spouses and family members, kids in the house. [*Laughter*] And I want to thank you as well, because you bear the burdens of service as well, whether it's separation from a loved one or transitioning to a new country. And I just want you to know that America is grateful for your sacrifice and your service.

Now, President Park and I just attended a briefing led by General Scaparrotti with the Combined Forces Command. And then, I signed the guest book that sits on top of a table where the Korean war armistice was signed. And both of those moments drove home the truth that, after more than 60 years, our alliance is as strong as it has ever been and as effective as it has ever been.

And nowhere is that more evident than in the professionalism and the interoperability of our militaries. Even when Scap had to travel to Washington to testify before Congress last month, he was never more than a phone call or a teleconference away from Admiral Choi. And that's because our forces on duty here—American and Korean—are highly trained, closely coordinated, fit to fight tonight and every other night.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. But obviously, in addition to dealing with the threat from North Korea, this is also an alliance that represents the incredible bonds between peoples. So I know that you provided quick support in response to last week's terrible ferry tragedy, because we understood when our friends are in trouble, America helps. And our hearts are broken for our Korean friends, especially the loss of so many wonderful young people. But we're inspired by the tales of heroism and selflessness: the young woman who tried to make sure everyone else had a lifejacket, even if it meant her own death; the man whose last words were, "I'm on my way to save the kids."

That's why America will continue to support every rescue and recovery effort. And it's that spirit that allows this alliance to endure: *Katchi kapshida*—we go together. That's what we're about. That's what we're about. That's been our common commitment for more than 60 years, in good times and in bad.

It was 1950, just 5 years after the end of World War II, when Communist armies first crossed the 38th parallel. And at the time, many Americans couldn't place Korea on a map. But we knew—as much as we had already given, as weary as we were of war—that we had a stake in what happened here in the Korean Peninsula, that we had to roll back the tide of communism, that as Americans, we had to stand with our South Korean friends.

And then, in September, the Americans arrived. The alliance we led with Korean troops landed in a surprise attack. And all told, nearly 1.8 million Americans would join the fight those next few years. The conditions were terribly difficult. The combat was brutal. The danger was close. By the end, nearly 37,000 Americans would give their last full measure of devotion on this faraway soil, but not without pushing the invading armies back across the line they had dared to cross.

If you want to know what that hard-earned, long-defended victory looks like, you look around this country, the Republic of Korea. This country has risen from occupation and ruin and become one of the most vibrant and open democracies in the world. Seoul, the city that has sprung up around this garrison, leads one of the most advanced and dynamic economies in the world.

When our veterans witness this nation's progress, when our veterans come here and see this great and modern country for themselves, they can say with pride, their efforts and their sacrifice was worth it. They see the real results of what they've done: a South Korea that is a world leader and a true partner in Asian security and stability. They see a country like ours, where children can not only have dreams, but those dreams are encouraged, and he or she can grow up to become Secretary General of the United Nations or President of the World Bank or even Ambassador from the U.S. to the country he was born in.

None of this was an accident. Freedom is not an accident. Progress is not an accident. Democracy is not an accident. These are things

that have to be fought for. And you're part of that legacy. They must be won. And they've got to be tended to constantly and defended without fail. And here, on freedom's frontier, they are, by every man and woman who has served and stood sentinel on this divided peninsula.

The 38th parallel now exists as much as a contrast between worlds as it does a border between nations; between a society that's open and one that is closed; between a democracy that is growing and a pariah state that would rather starve its people than feed their hopes and dreams.

That's not the results of a war, that's the result of the path that North Korea has taken, a path of confrontation and provocation and pursuing the world's most dangerous weapons. And I want to be clear: The commitment that the United States of America has made to the security of the Republic of Korea only grows stronger in the face of aggression. Our alliance does not waver with each bout of their attention-seeking, it just gains the support of the rest of the world.

North Korea's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons is a path that leads only to more isolation. It's not a sign of strength. Anybody can make threats. Anyone can move an army. Anyone can show off a missile. That doesn't make you strong. It does not lead to security or opportunity or respect. Those things don't come through force, they have to be earned.

And real strength is allowing an open and participatory democracy, where people can choose their own leaders and choose their own destiny. And real strength is allowing a vibrant society, where people can think and pray and speak their minds as they please, even if it's against their leaders. Especially if it's against their leaders. Real strength is allowing free and open markets that have built growing, thriving middle classes and lifted millions of people out of poverty.

We don't use our military might to impose these things on others, but we will not hesitate to use our military might to defend our allies and our way of life.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. So like all nations on Earth, North Korea and its people have a choice. They can choose to continue down a lonely road of isolation, or they can choose to join the rest of the world, seek a future of greater opportunity and greater security and greater respect, a future that already exists for the citizens on the southern end of the Korean Peninsula.

And if they choose this path, America and the Republic of Korea and the rest of the world will help them build that future. But if they do not, they should know that the commitment of the United States of America to the security and defense of the Republic of Korea has not wavered once in more than 60 years. It never has, and it never will.

This alliance is special, forged on the battlefield and has been fortified by the common values and mutual interest and mutual respect of our peoples. The United States and Korea are more than allies, we are friends. And this foundation of trust and security and stability that allows both our nations to thrive economically and socially is made possible by the service and sacrifice of every one of you, our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, diplomats. You are the tip of the spear on freedom's frontier. You carry high the legacy left by all those who fought and served here. And to the family members, both here in South Korea and awaiting your return back home, I thank you for your service as well.

Because of that service and the service of generations of servicemembers and diplomats, our countries still stands, and our founding principles still shine, and nations around the world that once knew nothing but bitter tastes of fear, now know the blessings of freedom. That's because of you. I could not be prouder to be your Commander in Chief.

And now I'm going to come down and shake some hands and thank you in person.

God bless you, God bless the Republic of Korea, God bless the United States of America, and God bless our alliance. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Choi Yun-

hee, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff of South Korea; and Park Ji-young and Yang Dee-hong, crewmembers of the South Korean ferry *Sewol,* which sank on April 16.

Joint Statement by Group of Seven Leaders on the Situation in Ukraine
April 26, 2014

We, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, join in expressing our deep concern at the continued efforts by separatists backed by Russia to destabilize eastern Ukraine and our commitment to taking further steps to ensure a peaceful and stable environment for the May 25 presidential election.

We welcomed the positive steps taken by Ukraine to meet its commitments under the Geneva accord of April 17 by Ukraine, Russia, the European Union, and the United States. These actions include working towards constitutional reform and decentralization, proposing an amnesty law for those who will peacefully leave the buildings they have seized in eastern Ukraine, and supporting the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We also note that the Government of Ukraine has acted with restraint in dealing with the armed bands illegally occupying government buildings and forming illegal checkpoints.

In contrast, Russia has taken no concrete actions in support of the Geneva accord. It has not publicly supported the accord, nor condemned the acts of pro-separatists seeking to destabilize Ukraine, nor called on armed militants to leave peacefully the government buildings they've occupied and put down their arms. Instead, it has continued to escalate tensions by increasingly concerning rhetoric and ongoing threatening military maneuvers on Ukraine's border.

We reiterate our strong condemnation of Russia's illegal attempt to annex Crimea and Sevastopol, which we do not recognize. We will now follow through on the full legal and practical consequences of this illegal annexation, including but not limited to the economic, trade and financial areas.

We have now agreed that we will move swiftly to impose additional sanctions on Russia. Given the urgency of securing the opportunity for a successful and peaceful democratic vote next month in Ukraine's presidential elections, we have committed to act urgently to intensify targeted sanctions and measures to increase the costs of Russia's actions.

Russia's actions in Ukraine and the response from the international community already have imposed significant costs on its economy. While we continue to prepare to move to broader, coordinated sanctions, including sectoral measures should circumstances warrant, as we committed to in The Hague on March 24, we underscore that the door remains open to a diplomatic resolution of this crisis, on the basis of the Geneva accord. We urge Russia to join us in committing to that path.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by King Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
April 26, 2014

King Abdul Halim. The Honorable President Barack Obama, President of the United States; Excellencies; honored guests; ladies and gentlemen: The Raja Permaisuri Agong joins us in warmly welcoming you, Mr. President, and your delegation to Istana Negara on the occasion of your state visit to Malaysia.

The visit clearly manifests the excellent state of the longstanding relations between our governments and people of Malaysia and the United States.

Your Honorable, we are heartened that your visit builds upon the close bond of friendship between our two countries on the recent missing flight MH370 involving many nationalities, including Malaysians and Americans. We wish to express our utmost gratitude for the U.S. unwavering support and cooperation. Your involvement since the beginning of the search and rescue mission and the ongoing recovery operation indeed exemplifies the strong commitment established between our two countries.

We are pleased to see the ties between our two countries gaining so much traction. Over the years, the two countries' common interests and shared values have flourished. We are also delighted that both our countries will be discussing ways to strengthen cooperation in wide-ranging areas of economy, security and defense, education, energy, science and technology, and people-to-people relations.

The economic ties between our two countries have been very strong. Your continuous support to our country's economic growth would prepare Malaysia in its aspiration to reach the developed nation status.

We welcome the United States to continue working hand in hand with Malaysia to ensure the peace and stability of the region. This could be attained through the shared values and mutual respect, understanding, and moderation, coupled by the strong people-to-people relations, testifying both our countries' good will and mutual understanding.

Mr. President, you can be rest assured that Malaysia will continue our efforts to build a strong, nourished, and lasting relationship between the United States as a foundation for the stability and prosperity of our countries.

We hope that your visit to Malaysia is both meaningful and memorable. It is our hope that you will enjoy our hospitality and return to the United States with fond memories of Malaysia. We pray for your continued good health, as well as for that of your family and for the people of the United States. We pray also for peace, stability, and prosperity for both our countries in the years to come.

Ladies and gentlemen, we would like to invite all of you to join us in proposing a toast to the President and the people of the United States.

Thank you.

[*At this point, King Abdul Halim offered a toast.*]

President Obama. Good evening. *Selamat petang.* Your Majesty, thank you so much for those warm words. To you; Her Majesty; Madam Rosmah; Prime Minister; distinguished guests and friends: Thank you for the extraordinary hospitality that you've shown me and my delegation. And on behalf of my country, I want to thank the Malaysian people for the wonderful welcome that you extended to us today.

I'm delighted to make this historic visit. As some of you may know, it has been nearly 50 years since an American President visited Malaysia. In his memoirs, Lyndon Johnson wrote of how impressed he was by the "extraordinary vitality and eagerness" he saw in the faces of people here and throughout Southeast Asia. And I'm eager to see that same *boleh* spirit tomorrow when I have the opportunity to speak with young people from across Southeast Asia at the University of Malaya.

Mr. Prime Minister, I look forward to our work together, and I pledge to infuse our efforts with that same spirit. Tonight I simply want to express my gratitude for the generosity that you've shown us today, a generosity the people of Malaysia have extended to my family since I was elected.

As some of you may know, 2 years ago, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia hosted an exhibit that showcased some of my mother's batik collection. Now, my mother loved batik. I remember when I was a boy growing up in Jakarta, she'd come home from village markets with her arms full of batik, and she'd lay them around the house and look at them and make dresses out of them. And I was a young boy, so I wasn't as excited as she was. [*Laughter*]

And they weren't particularly fancy or expensive—although, later in life, she would get some antiques that were extraordinary—but for my mother, batik wasn't about fashion. It was representative of the work and the livelihood of mothers and young women who had painstakingly crafted them. It was a window into the lives of others, their cultures and their traditions and their hopes. And it meant so much to her, and it was part of her spirit, and so I'm deeply grateful to the people of Malaysia for celebrating that part of my mother's life. It was very kind of you.

And I tell this story because my mother believed, and I believe, that whether we come from a remote village or a big city, whether we live in the United States or in Malaysia, that we all share basic human aspirations: to live in dignity and peace, to shape our own destiny, to be able to make a living and to work hard and support a family and, most of all, to leave the next generation something better than was left to us.

These are the aspirations that I believe illuminate a new era of partnership—of *berkerjasama*—between the United States and Malaysia. For while we may be different as nations, our people have similar hopes and similar aspirations. And we can draw strength in both our nations from our ethnic and religious diversity. We can draw hope from our history. And we dream of a brighter future for all of our children.

So I would like to propose a toast: To the strength of our relationship, the power of our friendship, the peace and prosperity of our peoples, and the good health of Their Majesties the King and Queen.

[*President Obama offered a toast.*]

President Obama. Terima kasih banyak. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:38 p.m. at the Istana Negara. In his remarks, he referred to Queen Tuanku Hajah Haminah of Malaysia; and Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia and his wife Rosmah Mansor.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur
April 27, 2014

Moderator. Thank you. Please be seated. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we will begin this press conference today with a statement by the Prime Minister of Malaysia followed by a statement by the President of the United States. And then, the two leaders will take questions. Ladies and gentlemen, the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Prime Minister Najib. As-salaam alaikum—[*inaudible*]. And very good afternoon. It is an honor to host you, Mr. President, and United States delegation. On behalf of the Malaysian people, I extend to you our warmest greetings.

And normally, I would say *selamat datang*, which means "welcome" in our language. But since you grew up not far from here, you're one of the few leaders, world leaders, who will understand when I say *selamat datang, sahabat saya.* [*Laughter*]

Forty-eight years ago, a U.S. President first stepped onto Malaysian soil. Back then, TV was black and white. The Monkees were topping the U.S. charts with "The Last Train to Clarksville." [*Laughter*]

President Obama. It's a good song. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Najib. And "The Sound of Music" movie was winning Academy Awards. Today, Mr. President, you see not rubber trees, as Lyndon B. Johnson did, but soaring skyscrapers. They are testament to the transformation that is taking place here in Malaysia. And on this journey, we are thankful for the United States hand of friendship.

Over the past 2 months, the strength of our relationship has been revealed for all to see. From the day MH370 went missing, the United States lent its considerable expertise to the investigation and its unique capabilities and as-

sets to the search effort. We are grateful to you for standing by Malaysia in our hour of need.

The U.S. and Malaysia have a longstanding relationship. We established diplomatic relations on the day of Malaysia's independence in 1957. In the decades that followed, when ideological tensions tore at Southeast Asia, the U.S. and Malaysia remained firm friends. And over the past few years, we have been working to strengthen the bonds between us. Today, we see the fruits of this labor on the economy, on security, and on people-to-people relations. We are closer now than ever before.

Earlier this morning, the President and I talked at length about the issues we face in the region and in the world, and we took significant steps towards our shared objectives. First and foremost, we agreed to upgrade our bilateral relations to a comprehensive partnership. This marks a new phase in our relationship with greater collaboration on economy, security, education, science, technology, and more. We also decided to reinvigorate the senior officials dialogue as a key forum for high-level discussion. Together, these agreements lay a firm foundation for further cooperation to come.

Malaysia welcomes America's rebalancing towards Asia and its contribution to peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. Our continents share an ocean. We should be connected by common policy too. We believe all parties should share in Asia's remarkable growth story, provided they also share a commitment to the peace upon which it depends.

On global security, the President and I agreed to strengthen cooperation in peacekeeping training. Malaysia has also decided to endorse the "Statement of Interdiction Principles" of the Proliferation Security Initiative.

I expressed my appreciation to the President on U.S. strong support for ASEAN and the East Asia Summit and for the confidence they have expressed in Malaysia's chairmanship of ASEAN next year. As we prepare for this chairmanship, and as we bid for a nonpermanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, we seek a greater role in promoting global peace and regional stability. In these endeavors and more, our friendship with United States is immensely valued.

Just last month, Malaysia helped secure a comprehensive agreement in the Southern Philippines, ending a conflict which claimed 150,000 lives and denying Al Qaida and its affiliates a possible foothold in that region. We have rejected religious extremism by establishing Global Movement of Moderates.

On the South China Sea, President Obama and I both stressed earlier the importance of upholding universally recognized principles of international law, including United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We agreed that the full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties was vital and that an effective code of conduct would enhance mutual trust.

The President and I have agreed on a U.S.-Malaysia English Teaching Assistant Program, formerly known as the Fulbright Program. I'm happy to note that we've agreed on a bilateral work agreement for partners of diplomats, and I would like to thank President Obama for agreeing to consider Malaysia's participation in the Visa Waiver Program. I'm glad the U.S. is now committed to provide technical briefings, security requirements, and information-sharing agreements for this purpose.

For centuries, our people have done business across the Pacific. Today, we continue to do brisk trade. Our bilateral trade has averaged at least 35 billion U.S. dollars annually from 2010 to 2013, while last year, the United States was Malaysia's largest source of foreign investment, investing $1.9 billion in Malaysia and creating almost 8,000 jobs.

President Obama and I welcome the progress made on the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement negotiations. Trade deals are always complex, but our countries are committed to resolving the remaining issues. I know all sides share our desire for an agreement that delivers the best for our citizens and our businesses. I would like to thank President Obama for his understanding of Malaysia's challenges and sensitivities in the TPP negotiations.

Malaysia has always been a bridge between peoples and cultures, a trading nation bound

by vital seas. We are a modern, progressive, Muslim-majority nation, a multiethnic, multireligious society. We have long known the benefit of cooperation across borders, and we have long recognized the power of shared prosperity. In this context, it gives us sincere pleasure to welcome the U.S. delegation for this historic visit. Your presence here, Mr. President, will mark the beginning of the next phase of our partnership, with deeper friendship and a more comprehensive partnership.

Over the past few days, we have found common cause on issues that matter, those that would deliver opportunity for our people and security for our region. And we have set the stage for a new phase of our relationship, one based on greater cooperation needed to equal the challenges of our time.

Thank you.

President Obama. Selamat tengah hari. [*Laughter*] Thank you, Prime Minister Najib, for your warm welcome. I am very pleased to be the first U.S. President to visit Malaysia in almost 50 years. And it is wonderful to be staying in Kuala Lumpur, one of Asia's most dynamic cities.

I want to thank Their Majesties, the King and the Queen, for their incredible hospitality at last night's state dinner and the wonderful display of Malaysian culture in all its beauty and diversity. And I want to thank the people of Malaysia for such a warm welcome.

Now, today, the United States is once again playing a leadership role in the Asia-Pacific. And a key part of our strategy is expanding our ties with Southeast Asia, and that includes Malaysia. By virtue of geography, Malaysia is central to regional stability, maritime security, and freedom of navigation. By virtue of its economic progress—that's evident for all who visit here for the first time—and by virtue of Prime Minister Najib's goal of making the economy even more competitive, Malaysia has the potential to unleash a new era of growth. And by virtue of its diversity—people from so many ethnic groups and backgrounds, holding different political beliefs and practicing different faiths—Malaysia has the opportunity to draw on the enormous strengths of its people.

In the United States, embracing that diversity and upholding the rights and dignity of all our citizens has always made us stronger, and I believe it can make Malaysia even stronger as well.

I welcomed Prime Minister Najib to Washington 4 years ago, and we agreed at that time to broaden and deepen the relationship between our countries. Today, across a whole range of areas—security, trade, regional institutions—we're working more closely together than ever before. And today I'm pleased that we're formalizing our efforts in a new comprehensive partnership.

I'd note that we've also seen our cooperation during the response to the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines Flight 370. And I want to again express the deepest condolences of the American people to all the families who lost loved ones on that flight: Malaysian, American, Chinese, and people from many other nations.

As we have since the beginning of this tragedy, we're working closely with our Malaysian partners, and we will continue to provide all the assistance we can in their search and the investigation. And today the Prime Minister and I discussed some of the lessons that are being learned from this tragedy and how nations, including our own, might continue to improve our cooperation moving forward.

The comprehensive partnership we're launching today aims to deepen our economic ties. As the Prime Minister noted, Malaysia and the United States are already close economic partners, and we're working together on the Trans-Pacific Partnership to open up Asia-Pacific markets, boost exports, promote innovation and growth in both our nations. The TPP will support good jobs in the United States and Malaysia, and it will help Malaysia meet its goal to become a high-income economy by the end of the decade.

Today the Prime Minister and I discussed the particular issues of importance to Malaysia, and we agreed to work quickly to resolve those issues, consistent with a final, high-standards, comprehensive TPP agreement. And tomorrow we'll have the opportunity to join some of our business leaders as they sign three com-

mercial agreements worth more than $1 billion of new trade and investment between our nations.

Our comprehensive partnership will expand our security cooperation. As a founding member of ASEAN and the East Asia Summit, Malaysia has already been a critical leader in building the institutions that can advance regional prosperity and security. Strengthening ASEAN unity and its central role in the region is a key part of our own American engagement in Asia. We very much agree with ASEAN's view and Malaysia's view that disputes need to be resolved peacefully, without intimidation or coercion, and that all nations must abide by international rules and international norms.

We welcome Malaysia's recent endorsement of the principles of the Proliferation Security Initiative, the global effort to prevent the tracking [trafficking]* of weapons of mass destruction. We're aiming to step up our coordination on a range of challenges, from disaster relief to maritime security. And we are looking forward to working closely with Malaysia on all these issues when it chairs both ASEAN and the EAS next year.

And finally, our comprehensive partnership will continue to strengthen the strong ties between our peoples, especially our young people. The young women and men of Malaysia are brimming with potential, and we want to do more together to open the door of opportunity to everybody, regardless of race, religion, gender, or language. That's why the Prime Minister and I will be meeting with entrepreneurs from Malaysia and why I'll be engaging with promising young leaders from across South [Southeast]* Asia later this afternoon. And thanks to the tremendous success of our program to bring young Americans to Malaysia to teach English, the Prime Minister and I agreed to renew that program for several more years.

The time that I spent in this region as a child helped to shape my understanding of the world, broadened my vision, left me with a lifelong affection for the people and traditions of Southeast Asia. And I look forward to a new generation of Americans getting that same experience here in Malaysia.

So, Prime Minister Najib, thank you again for your partnership, for your vision for what our nations can accomplish together, not only for our two peoples, but for the peace and prosperity of this entire region. *Terima kasih banyak.*

Moderator. Thank you, Excellencies. The leaders will now take questions. We will begin with the first question from the Malaysian media. I'd like to call upon Malaysia's TV–3 to have the first question. Go ahead.

Do we have the mike?

Q. Yes. Good afternoon and *selamat datang* to Mr. President.

President Obama. Thank you.

Nuclear Nonproliferation Efforts/Malaysia-U.S. Security Cooperation

Q. I am Azura from TV–3 Malaysia. I have a question on the issue of Proliferation Security Initiative. [*Inaudible*]—this is something new for Malaysia. Are we going to be the 103d member for PSI? And what is the SOP like? And do we have the expertise?

And for Mr. President, is the U.S. going to assist us in capacity building and other requirements? Thank you.

Prime Minister Najib. Well, this PSI is actually not new in substance, because we've been working very closely with United States, and whenever there is a request for us to do some interdiction, we've never failed to respond. What I'm—what we're doing today is to formalize it so that there will be a formal relationship. And that relationship will just continue what we have done, and it also reflects a strong will and desire on Malaysia's side to cooperate not only with the United States, with the international community, to stop the profilation—proliferation—sorry——

President Obama. It's a hard one. I always screw it up. [*Laughter*]

* White House correction.

Prime Minister Najib. ——for the spread, rather—[*laughter*]—of parts for nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. I'll get it right, don't worry. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. Well, the—as the Prime Minister said, this is an area where we've already developed strong partnership. And I want to commend Prime Minister Najib and his national security team and his law enforcement, intelligence teams. I think it's fair to say that when both of us came into office, this wasn't at the top of the priority list. And what we were seeing, though, was that this region was a potential area where traffickers in parts and systems that could lead to nuclear proliferation or weapons of mass destruction could operate.

And so in our conversations, in our teams' consultations, we began to tighten the links and bonds between us in terms of sharing information, identifying threats, and working more closely and cooperatively together. And we've done that.

What the PSI does, as the Prime Minister says, is formalize it. It puts a framework around it. It involves capacity building, but it's not just a one-way street. Obviously, we have been working on these issues for a long time. I consider the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as one of the greatest threats to U.S. security, as well as international peace. So we have developed a lot of capacities in this area.

But this is a partnership, and what we seek to do is to find ways in which the strengths and the information that each side has can be enhanced and combined and pooled so that we don't have the possibility of loose nuclear materials or certain component parts that are being shipped or falling into the wrong hands. And we very much appreciate the cooperation that's already there, but I think what the PSI signifies is that we can do even better in the future. Okay.

White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney. The next question comes from Chuck Todd of NBC News.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. And, Mr. Prime Minister, *selamat tengah hari.*

President Obama. There you go.

Q. Did I get that right?

President Obama. Good job there, Chuck.

Ukraine/Los Angeles Clippers Owner Donald Sterling/Trans-Pacific Partnership

Q. Mr. President, on the situation in Ukraine and the Russian sanctions that I know the United States and others may be announcing on Monday, I guess my question is, why wait on sectoral sanctions, as far as the United States is concerned? Why not do that on your own, now and sooner, rather than wait for the Europeans to get on board on this? Because aren't you concerned that Putin is essentially using the European angst over tougher sanctions as a way to slow-walk things and buy more time and space for himself?

Quickly, on a second topic, Mr. President, there's a controversy surrounding some horrendous, racially charged comments that an owner of the L.A. Clippers made. I was wondering if you care to comment on that.

And to the Prime Minister, the TPP—I know you talked about it—it's been generating some protests here in your country, including another one today, chief concern being some worries of higher costs of medical supplies in particular. Are you—I was wondering if you can comment on those protests and their—the concern that somehow you're being bullied into the TPP by the United States. Do you feel that way on that front? Thank you.

President Obama. Okay. First, on Ukraine, in consultation with our European partners, we've determined that because Russia has failed to follow through on its side of the accord that had been hammered out in Geneva, it was important for us to take further steps, sending a message to Russia that the kind of destabilizing activities that are taking place in the east and the south of Ukraine have to stop.

There was a glimmer of hope after the Geneva accords that Ukraine would follow through on its commitments to enter into a dialogue around constitutional reforms, that it would do everything it needed to do to disarm irregular forces and militias, and it would offer amnesty to those who willingly laid down arms and pulled out of the buildings. They've been

doing that. Russia has not lifted a finger to help. In fact, there's strong evidence that they have been encouraging the kinds of activities that have been taking place in eastern and southern Ukraine.

And so, collectively, us and the Europeans have said that so long as Russia continues down the path of provocation rather than trying to resolve this issue peacefully and deescalating, there are going to be consequences. And those consequences will continue to grow.

Now, the notion that for us to go forward with sectoral sanctions on our own without the Europeans would be the most effective deterrent to Mr. Putin, I think, is factually wrong. We're going to be in a stronger position to deter Mr. Putin when he sees that the world is unified and the United States and Europe is unified, rather than, this is just a U.S.-Russian conflict.

And in fact, you notice that oftentimes they're really interested in portraying this through this old cold war prism, when, in fact, that's not what the issue is here. The issue is respecting basic international norms of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The issue is, can the Ukrainians make their own decisions about how they govern themselves and who they have international relations with? That's our only interest in this whole process.

And so it's important for us to make sure that we are part of an international coalition sending that message and that Russia is isolated in its actions, rather than falling into the trap of interpreting this as the United States is trying to pull Ukraine out of Russia's orbit, circa 1950. Because that's not what this is about. And the Europeans have a larger stake in this than anyone.

Now, as I said, I think, at the last press conference, there are going to be differences even within Europe, in part because of the nature of the economic relationships that they've got. And we've got to work through those in a systematic way. If in fact we need to move forward with sectoral sanctions, then it's going to be important that we know exactly what we're prepared to do and sustain over the long haul; our European partners know what they're willing and able to do as well. And the more we are unified, the more effective it's going to be.

If we, for example, say we're not going to allow certain arms sales to Russia—just to take an example—but every European defense contractor backfills what we do, then it's not very effective. It's going to be more effective if everybody signs on and everybody is committed.

Q. But sectoral sanctions will only happen with European approval?

President Obama. No. I didn't say "only," "never," "when." I said this is our strategy. And I want to emphasize, every time I address this question, there is a diplomatic path to resolving this issue. The Geneva statement pointed towards how we could resolve this statement. What it asks of the Russians is hardly onerous: Make a public statement that those militias need to lay down their arms and exit those buildings; participate with international observers and monitors, rather than stand by while they're being bullied and, in some cases, detained by these thugs; negotiate with the Ukrainian Government and engage in some confidence-building measures. I mean, these aren't heavy lifts if the Russians are sincere in wanting to resolve this problem. So far, we haven't seen that, but we're going to keep on raising the consequences of Russia rejecting that path towards diplomacy.

With respect to the statements by the owner of the Los Angeles Clippers—for our Malaysian audience, this is a sports team, basketball team, in the United States. The owner is reported to have said some incredibly offensive, racist statements that were published. I don't think I have to interpret those statements for you; they kind of speak for themselves. When people—when ignorant folks want to advertise their ignorance, you don't really have to do anything, you just let them talk. [*Laughter*] And that's what happened here.

I have confidence that the NBA commissioner, Adam Silver, a good man, will address this. Obviously, the NBA is a league that is beloved by fans all across the country. It's got an awful lot of African American players. It's steeped in African American culture. And I

suspect that the NBA is going to be deeply concerned in resolving this.

I will make just one larger comment about this. We—the United States continues to wrestle with a legacy of race and slavery and segregation that's still there, the vestiges of discrimination. We've made enormous strides, but you're going to continue to see this percolate up every so often. And I think that we just have to be clear and steady in denouncing it, teaching our children differently, but also remaining hopeful that part of why some statements like this stand out so much is because there have been a shift—there has been this shift in how we view ourselves.

And like Malaysia, we constantly have to be on guard against racial attitudes that divide us rather than embracing our diversity as a strength. And I know that the people of Malaysia are committed to wrestling with those issues as well. We have to make sure that we stay on top of it, and we will.

Even though it wasn't directed at me, I am going to say one thing about TPP, this notion somehow that some protests here might indicate U.S. bullying. Keep in mind, I've got protests back home from my own party about TPP. So there's never been a trade deal in which somebody is not going to at some point object because they're fearful of the future or they're invested in the status quo. And I think it's just very important for everybody to wait and see what exactly is the agreement that has been negotiated before folks jump to conclusions.

You take an issue like drugs, for example, the United States does extraordinary work in research and development and providing medical breakthroughs that save a lot of lives around the world. Those companies that make those investments in that research oftentimes want a return, and so there are all kinds of issues around intellectual property and patents and so forth.

At the same time, I think we would all agree that if there's a medicine that can save a lot of lives, then we've got to find a way to make sure that it's available to folks who simply can't afford it as part of our common humanity. And both those values are reflected in the conversations and negotiations that are taking place around TPP. So the assumption somehow that right off the bat, that's not something we're paying attention to, that reflects lack of knowledge of what is going on in the negotiations.

But my point is, you shouldn't be surprised if there are going to be objections, protests, rumors, conspiracy theories, political aggravation around a trade deal. You've been around long enough, Chuck. That's true in Malaysia, it's true in Tokyo, it's true in Seoul. It's true in the United States of America, and it's true in the Democratic Party.

So I continue to strongly believe, however, that this is going to be the right thing to do, creating jobs, creating businesses, expanding opportunity for the United States. And it's going to be good for countries like Malaysia that have been growing rapidly, but are interested in making that next leap to the higher value aspects of the supply chain that can really boost income growth and development.

Prime Minister Najib. I'd just like to echo what President Obama said. Emphatically, in no uncertain terms, we went to the TPP on our own accord. We were not bullied into it. And I can attest to our commitment towards free trade as to principle and philosophy, because we have entered into 13 separate FTA agreements with other countries.

So Malaysia is a great believer in free trade. But we also understand that the benefits of free trade like boosting trade, creating wealth, jobs—those are the good things. But there will be some losers in the process; there will be winners and losers. But overall, the benefit, I think—it's important for us to show to the people in Malaysia that the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages of a free trade agreement.

And this is what, in a final analysis, what we have to do, because the underpinnings of a free trade agreement would be acceptance by the people. And we are committed to that process. We'll engage with the public, and we'll also present it to parliament.

So we are working out around the sensitivities and challenges, which I alluded to in my discussions with President Obama. He fully

understands our domestic sensitivities, and we will sit down and try to iron this out with the intention of trying to work out a deal in the near future.

Moderator. The next question will be from the Malaysian side. Can I call upon—[*inaudible*]?

Malaysia Airlines Flight 370/Visa Waiver Program

Q. Mr. President, *selamat datang.* Mr. President, how do you see Malaysia efforts and ability in getting multinational's support and efforts for the missing MH370 search-and-rescue operation? And, Mr. President, I'd appreciate if you can elaborate on the visa waiver request.

President Obama. Well, I know personally, because I've been in consultation with my team and all the assets that we have available, that the Malaysian Government is working tirelessly to recover the aircraft and investigate exactly what happened. And I can't speak for all the countries in the region, but I can say that the United States and other partners have found the Malaysian Government eager for assistance, have been fully forthcoming with us in terms of the information that they have. And this is a joint effort. It's not easy.

Obviously, we don't know all the details of what happened, but we do know that if in fact the plane went down in the ocean in this part of the world, that is a big, big place, and it is a very challenging effort and laborious effort that's going to take quite some time.

I completely understand the heartache that the families are going through and wanting answers. And I think it's very important—and I have said to Prime Minister Najib—that there should be full transparency in terms of what we know, what we don't know, how the process is proceeding. But I can tell you that the United States is absolutely committed to providing whatever resources and assets that we can and that the Malaysian Government has been very welcoming of that assistance.

On the Visa Waiver Program, the way it works in the United States, we've got a very clear set of laws and provisions in terms of how someone—how a country qualifies to be part of the Visa Waiver Program. And the Prime Minister raised this issue with me, and my team is prepared to work with the Malaysian Government to go through the various steps. Typically, it takes some time; it's not something that happens overnight, because we have to make sure that the kinds of information-sharing, the reporting about lost and stolen passports, terrorist watch lists—that all those pieces are in place—before it's facilitated.

But given the growing and expanding trade that exists and the people-to-people relations between Malaysia and the United States, I want to make sure that we can start down a path. It may take a little bit of time, but we welcome the opportunity to engage with the Government on this issue.

Human Rights Issues/Malaysian Opposition Leader Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim

Press Secretary Carney. The last question—I'm sorry. No. Sorry. The last question, Major Garrett of CBS News.

Q. Prime Minister Najib, good afternoon. Thank you for your hospitality, sir.

Mr. President, you said at your press conference in Seoul—you expressed some frustration with the narrative that military force is the best response to difficult foreign policy challenges. I invite you to expand on that if you want to. But I'm more curious about what you said right after that: There are many tools in the American toolbox to advance foreign policy interests.

And as you know, one of those tools is for America to use her prestige to speak out on behalf of human rights, racial tolerance, political accountability, and free speech. As you well know, Mr. President, those issues are up for grabs in Malaysia right now, and they're probably best symbolized by the precarious legal position of Anwar Ibrahim, the opposition political leader in this country. Vice—former Vice President Al Gore has taken up his cause, as has Human Rights Watch and other international lawyers interested in human rights. Can you explain, sir, why you have said nothing about these issues here in Malaysia, why you will not meet with Mr. Ibrahim, and how it's possible for the United States Government to

advance these interests of political reform when it won't use the nonmilitary tools in the toolbox you described in Seoul?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, have you made any commitments to the United States Government about your efforts in the future to address the issue of political reform here in Malaysia? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, first of all, Major, I think it's important to note that there is not a meeting I have around the world where issues of freedom of the press, human rights, civil liberties aren't prominent on the agenda. And that includes my meeting with Prime Minister Najib. And I think when you say that issues are all "up for grabs" in Malaysia, I think that implies a judgment about what's happening here in Malaysia that may not fully reflect the progress that's been made by Prime Minister Najib, but also the recognition, I think, by the Malaysian Government that there's more work that needs to be done.

The fact that I haven't met with Mr. Anwar in and of itself is not indicative of our lack of concern, given the fact that there are a lot of people I don't meet with and opposition leaders that I don't meet with. And that doesn't mean that I'm not concerned about them.

But what I have shared with the Prime Minister is the core belief that societies that respect rule of law, that respect freedom of speech, that respect the right of opposition to oppose even when it drives you crazy, even when it's inconvenient, the respect for freedom of assembly, the respect for people of different races and different faiths and different political philosophies—that those values are at the core of who the U.S. is, but also, I think, are a pretty good gauge of whether a society is going to be successful in the 21st century or not.

And I think the Prime Minister is the first to acknowledge that Malaysia has still got some work to do, just like the United States, by the way, has some work to do on these issues. Human Rights Watch probably has a list of things they think we should be doing as a government. And I am going to be constantly committed to making sure that these issues get raised in a constructive way. And Prime Minister Najib came in as a reformer and one who is committed to it, and I'm going to continue to encourage him as a friend and a partner to make sure that we're making progress on that front.

Prime Minister Najib. Well, President Obama and I are both equally concerned about civil liberties as a principle. And as you know, when I came to office 2009, I introduced a slew of reforms, which include a very major undertaking on our part, which is to abolish the detention without trial, ISA. And now, other countries have not done so, but Malaysia has taken the lead in doing so. We've also introduced the Peaceful Assembly Act, the right to protest, the right to assemble.

And within this period, it would be fair to say that this is the largest or the biggest reform in terms of civil liberties in Malaysia's history. So in that, I think you should not underestimate or diminish whatever we have done.

Specifically, on Anwar's case, it's not—I want to put it on record: it's not about the Government against him. It's an action taken by an individual who happens to be his former employee who's taken up this case against him—a complainant. And under the eyes of the law, even if you're a small man or a big man, you have equal justice. I think you believe in that principle.

So now the matter is before the courts. It's not right for me to comment anything more than that. But be assured that Malaysia is committed to the rule of law, to the independence of judiciary, and to civil liberties. As the President said, there's more work to be done. But it also means society has got to be prepared for it, for change, because what is important is the end result. And the end result, as the Prime Minister of this country, I'm committed to ensure peace, stability, and harmony. That is the most important thing. And people must respect that, because there are sensitivities on either side, sensitivities relating to minorities and majority as well.

So we have to manage that, and that's exactly what Malaysia has done. And because of that, we are a relatively peaceful, harmonious nation. Thank you.

President Obama. Okay. Thank you very much. *Terima Kasih.*

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:32 p.m. at the Perdana Putra. In his remarks, the President referred to King Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah and Queen Tuanku Hajah Haminah of Malaysia; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. Prime Minister Najib referred to Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, a former aide to Malaysian opposition leader Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who brought sodomy and corruption charges against his former employer in 1998.

Remarks at the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre in Cyberjaya, Malaysia
April 27, 2014

President Obama. Well, hello, everybody.

Audience members. Hello!

President Obama. Selamat petang. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Prime Minister Najib for bringing me here today, as well as Cheryl Yeoh. Where's Cheryl? She was here just a second ago.

Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia. Cheryl. There's Cheryl.

President Obama. There she is over there—[*applause*]—who's going to be directing the Malaysia Global Innovation and Creativity Center, or MaGIC, and Startup Malaysia.

As Prime Minister Najib indicated, we are here because we have a shared commitment to fostering the spirit of entrepreneurship, especially among our young people. We want you to be able to create things and start your own companies and your own businesses and come up with your own products and services, because that's how our societies grow. And the dreams and talents of these young people help to fuel our economies and create jobs, and they also bring our countries closer together.

So, 5 years ago, when I was in Cairo, I called for a new partnership between the United States and Muslim communities around the world, partnerships where we could focus on the things that matter most in people's daily lives, including jobs and providing for our families. So often, the conversation between the United States and Muslim communities was around security issues, but the truth is, day to day, what people are concerned about is jobs and businesses and improving quality of life for themselves and their families. And that was not enough of a conversation that was taking place.

So I was proud to host the first Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Washington. Prime Minister Najib, who has been working to empower entrepreneurs here in Malaysia, hosted last year's summit in Kuala Lumpur. And the impact has been phenomenal.

Around the world, we are helping young entrepreneurs connect and collaborate and start their own businesses, serve their communities, tackle global challenges like expanding education and combating climate change, and create this center to turn their ideas into reality. And this center is a direct result of the entrepreneurship summit that the Prime Minister hosted. It's a one-stop shop so young entrepreneurs, they can come here, they can get help with their—to file a patent for their ideas, they can access loans and venture capital, they can get technical training and assistance, and they can get their businesses up and running.

And we just had a chance to see some innovations of some young entrepreneurs that have already been started: an online tool that helps student learn with digital presentations; a very impressive electric gocart; a device that helps diabetics monitor cold sweats so that if they are in need of medical assistance, somebody will be alerted right away. And so this is the kind of entrepreneurship that Prime Minister Najib and I want to encourage. And it's innovation like these that's going to make our lives better and safer and healthier.

These young people here, they're going to be creating all kinds of amazing things when

they get older. And the fact that this center is giving them the opportunity to learn computer coding early on, understanding that computer sciences and IT are going to be one of the keys to future growth, I think is a testament to some outstanding investments by the people of Malaysia and the next generation.

So I want to thank Prime Minister Najib for all his efforts to support young entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs. I want to thank all of you for your determination and your imagination. I'm very excited to see what's going to happen not only with the entrepreneurs here in the future, but these young people and the remarkable things they'll do to help Malaysia grow, help the region grow, and help the world grow.

So *terima kasih banyak* for the good work that you're doing. [*Laughter*] Yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:53 p.m.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Town Hall Meeting at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

April 27, 2014

President Obama. Hello, everybody. Well, good afternoon. *Selamat petang.* Please, everybody have a seat. It is wonderful to be here, and it is wonderful to see all these outstanding young people here.

I want to thank, first of all, the University of Malaya for hosting us. I want to thank the Malaysian people for making us feel so welcome. Anita, thank you for helping to moderate.

These trips are usually all business for me, but every once in a while, I want to have some fun, so I try to hold an event like this where I get to hear directly from young people like you, because I firmly believe that you will shape the future of your countries and the future of this region. And I'm glad to see so many students who are here today, including young people from across Southeast Asia. And I know some of you are joining us online and through social media, and you'll be able to ask me questions too.

Now, this is my fifth trip to Asia as President, and I plan to be back again later this year, not just because I enjoy the sights and the food—although, I do—but because a few years ago, I made a deliberate and strategic decision as President of the United States that America will play a larger, more comprehensive role in this region's future.

I know some still ask what this strategy is all about. So before I answer your questions, I just want to answer that one question: why Asia is so important to America and why Southeast Asia has been a particular focus, and finally, why I believe that young people like you have to be the ones who lead us forward.

Now, many of you know this part of the world has special meaning for me. I was born in Hawaii, right in the middle of the Pacific. I lived in Indonesia as a boy. [*Applause*] Hey! This is the Indonesian contingent. [*Applause*] Hey! Yes, that's where they're from. My sister Maya was born in Jakarta. She's married to a man whose parents were born here, my brother-in-law's father in Sandakan and his mom in Kudat. And my mother spent years working in the villages of Southeast Asia, helping women buy sewing machines or gaining an education so that they could better earn a living.

And as I mentioned last night to His Majesty the King and the Prime Minister, I'm very grateful for the Islamic Arts Museum in Malaysia for hosting an exhibit that showcased some of my mother's batik collection, because it meant a lot to her and it's part of the connection that I felt and I continue to feel to this region.

So the Asia-Pacific, with its rich cultures and beautiful traditions and vibrant society, that's all part of who I am. It helped shape how I see the world. And it's also helped to shape my approach as President.

And while our Government, our financial centers, many of our traditions began along the Atlantic Coast, America has always been a Pacific nation as well. Our biggest, most populous State is on the Pacific Coast. And for generations, wave of immigrants from all over Asia—from different countries and races and religions—have come to America and contributed to our success.

From our earliest years, when our first President, George Washington, sent a trade mission to China, through last year, when the aircraft carrier that bears his name, the *George Washington*, helped with typhoon relief in the Philippines, America has always had a history with Asia. And we've got a future with Asia. This is the world's fastest growing region. Over the next 5 years, nearly half of all economic growth outside the United States is projected to come from right here in Asia.

That means this region is vital to creating jobs and opportunity not only for yourselves, but also for the American people. And any serious leader in America recognizes that fact. And because you're home to more than half of humanity, Asia will largely define the contours of the century ahead, whether it's going to be marked by conflict or cooperation, by human suffering or human progress. So this is why America has refocused our attention on the vast potential of the Asia-Pacific region.

My country has come through a decade in which we fought two wars and an economic crisis that hurt us badly, along with countries all over the globe. But we've now ended the war in Iraq; our war in Afghanistan will end this year. Our businesses are steadily creating new jobs. And we've begun addressing the challenges that have weighed down our economy for far—for too long: reforming our health care and financial systems, raising standards in our schools, building a clean energy economy, cutting our fiscal deficits by more than half since I took office.

So we've been busy at home. The crisis still confronts us in other parts of the world, from Middle East to Ukraine. But I want to be very clear. Let me be clear about this, because some people have wondered whether, because of what happens in Ukraine or what happens in the Middle East, whether this will sideline our strategy. It has not. We are focused, and we're going to follow through, on our interest in promoting a strong U.S.-Asia relationship

America has responsibilities all around the world, and we're glad to embrace those responsibilities. And yes, sometimes, we have a political system of our own, and it can be easy to lose sight of the long view. But we have been moving forward on our rebalance to this part of the world by opening ties of commerce and negotiating our most ambitious trade agreement; by increasing our defense and educational exchange cooperation and modernizing our alliances; by participating fully in regional institutions like the East Asia Summit, building deeper partnerships with emerging powers like Indonesia and Vietnam.

And increasingly, we're building these partnerships throughout Southeast Asia. Since President Johnson's visit here to Malaysia in 1966, there's perhaps no region on Earth that has changed so dramatically. Old dictatorships have crumbled. New voices have emerged. Controlled economies have given way to free markets. What used to be small villages, *kampungs,* are now gleaming skyscrapers. The 10 nations that make up ASEAN are home to nearly 1 in 10 of the world's citizens. And when you put those countries together, you're the seventh largest economy in the world, the fourth largest market for American exports, the number-one destination for American investment in Asia.

And I'm proud to be the first American President to meet regularly with all 10 ASEAN leaders, and I intend to do it every year that I remain President. By the way, I want to congratulate Malaysia on its turn to assume the chairmanship of ASEAN next year. Malaysia plays a central role in this region that will only keep growing over time, with an ability to promote economic growth and opportunity and be an anchor of stability and maritime security.

Now, one of the things that makes this region so interesting is its diversity. That diversity creates a unique intersection of humanity,

people from so many ethnic groups and backgrounds and religious and political beliefs. It gives Malaysia, as one primary example, the chance to prove—as America constantly tries to prove—that nations are stronger and more successful when they work to uphold the civil rights and political rights and human rights of all their citizens.

That's why, over the past few years, Prime Minister Najib and I have worked to broaden and deepen the relationship between our two countries in the same spirit of *berkerja sama* that I think so many of you embody. The United States remains the number-one investor in Malaysia. We're partnering to promote security in shipping lanes. We're making progress on the Trans-Pacific Partnership to boost trade that supports good jobs and prosperity in both our countries. Today I'm very pleased that we've forged a comprehensive partnership that lays the foundation for even closer cooperation for years to come.

But our strategy is more than just security alliances or trade agreements. It's also about building genuine relationships between the peoples of Asia and the peoples of the United States, especially young people. We want you to be getting to know the young people of the United States and partnering well into the future in science and technology and entrepreneurship and education.

One program that we're proud of here in Malaysia is the Fulbright English Teaching Assistants Program. [*Applause*] Hey, there we go. [*Laughter*] Over the past 2 years, nearly 200 Americans have come here, and they haven't just taught English, they've made lifelong friendships with their students and their communities.

Now, one of these Americans, I'm told, was a young woman named Kelsey, from a city in Boston—the city of Boston. Last year, after the Boston Marathon was attacked, she taught her students all about her hometown, its history and its culture. She taught them a phrase that's popular in Boston: "wicked awesome." So that was part of the English curriculum. [*Laughter*]

And so her students began to feel like a place—that this place, Boston, that was a world away was actually something they understood and they connected to and they cared about. So they responded by writing get-well cards and sending them to hospitals where many of the victims were being treated.

Partnerships like those remind us that the relationship between nations is not just defined by governments, but is defined by people, especially the young people who will determine the future long after those of us who are currently in positions of power leave the stage. And that's especially true in Southeast Asia, because almost two-thirds of the population in this region is under 35 years old. This is a young part of the world.

And I've seen the hope and the energy and optimism of your generation wherever I travel, from Rangoon to Jakarta, to here in K.L. I've seen the desire for conflict resolution through diplomacy and not war. I've seen the desire for prosperity through entrepreneurship, not corruption or cronyism. I've seen a longing for harmony not by holding down one segment of society, but by upholding the rights of every human being, regardless of what they look like or who they love or how they pray. And so you give me hope.

Robert Kennedy once said, "It is a revolutionary world that we live in, and thus it is young people who must take the lead." And I believe it is precisely because you've come of age in such world with fewer walls, with instant information—you have the world at your fingertips, and you can change it for the better. And I believe that together we can do things that your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents would have never imagined.

So today I am proud that we're launching a new Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative to increase and enhance America's engagement with young people across the region. You're part of this new effort. You're the next generation of leaders, in government, in civil society, in business and the arts.

Some of you have already founded nonprofit organizations to promote human rights or prevent human trafficking or encourage religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue. Some of you

have started projects to educate young people on the environment and engage them to protect our air and our water and to prevent climate change. Some of you have been building your own ASEAN-wide network of young leaders to meet challenges like youth unemployment. And I know that some of you have been spending this weekend collaborating on solutions to these major issues.

And over the next few months, across Southeast Asia, we're going to find ways to listen to young people about your ideas and the partnerships we can then build together to empower your efforts, develop new exchanges, connect young leaders across Southeast Asia with young Americans.

So that's part of what we're starting here today. And before I take your questions, let me just close by sharing with you the future that I want to work for in this region, about where we want America's rebalance in the Asia-Pacific to lead, the work that we can do together.

I believe that together we can make the Asia-Pacific more secure. America has the strongest military in the world, but we don't seek conflict, we seek to keep the peace. We want a future where disputes are resolved peacefully and where bigger nations don't bully smaller nations. All nations are equal in the eyes of international law. We want to deepen our cooperation with other nations on issues like counterterrorism and privacy, but also humanitarian aid and disaster relief, which will help us respond quickly to catastrophes like the tsunami in Japan or the typhoon in the Philippines. We want to do that together.

Together, we want to make the Asia-Pacific more prosperous, with more commerce and shared innovation and entrepreneurship. And we want to see broader and more inclusive development and prosperity. Through agreements like the TPP, we want to make sure nations in the Asia-Pacific can trade under rules that ensure fair access to markets and support jobs and economic growth for everybody and set high standards for the protection of workers and the environment.

Together, we want to make the Asia-Pacific—and the world—cleaner and more secure. The nations of this region are uniquely threatened by climate change. No nation is immune to dangerous and disruptive weather patterns, so every nation is going to have to do its part. The United States is ready to do ours. Last year, I introduced America's first-ever Climate Action Plan to use more clean energy and less dirty energy and cut the dangerous carbon pollution that contributes to climate change. So we want to cooperate with countries in Southeast Asia to do the same, to combat the destruction of our forests. We can't condemn future generations to a planet that is beyond fixing. We can only do that together.

Together, we can make this world more just. America is the world's oldest constitutional democracy. That means we're going to stand up for democracy. It's a part of who we are. And we do this not only because we think it's right, but because it's been proven to be the most stable and successful form of government. In recent decades, many Asian nations have shown that different nations can realize the promise of self-government in their own way; they have their own path. But we must recognize that democracies don't stop just with elections, they also depend on strong institutions and a vibrant civil society and open political space and tolerance of people who are different than you. We have to create an environment where the rights of every citizen, regardless of race or gender or religion or sexual orientation are not only protected, but respected.

So we want a future where nations that are pursuing reforms, like Myanmar, like Burma, consolidate their own democracy and allow for people of different faiths and ethnicities to live together in peace. We want to see open space for civil society in all our countries so that citizens can hold their governments accountable and improve their own communities. We want to work together to ensure that we're drawing on the potential of all our people, and that means ensuring women have full and equal access to opportunity, just like men.

And to make sure we can sustain all these efforts, we want a future where we're building an architecture of institutions and relationships. For America, that always begins with our alli-

ances, which serve as the cornerstone of our approach to the world. But we also want to work with organizations like ASEAN and in forums like APEC and the East Asia Summit to resolve disputes and forge new partnerships. And we want to cooperate with our old allies and our emerging partners and with China. We want to see a peaceful rise for China, because we think it can and should contribute to the stability and prosperity that we all seek.

So that's the shared future I want to see in the Asia-Pacific. Now, America cannot impose that future. It's one that we need to build together, in partnership, with all the nations and peoples of the region, especially young people. That vision is within our reach if we're willing to work for it.

This world has its share of threats and challenges, and that's usually what makes the news. We know that progress can always be reversed and that positive change is achieved not through passion alone, but through patient and persistent effort. But we've seen things change for the better in this region and around the world because of the effort of ordinary people, together—working together. It's possible. We've seen it in the opportunity and progress that's been unleashed in this amazing part of the world.

So I've only been in Malaysia for a day, but I've already picked up a new phrase: *Malaysia boleh.* Malaysia can do it. Now, I have to say, we have a similar saying in America: Yes, we can. [*Laughter*] That's the spirit in which I hope America and all the nations of Southeast Asia can work together, but it's going to depend on your generation to carry it forward, because Presidents and Prime Ministers, they can help lay the foundation, but you've got to build the future.

So now I want to hear directly from you. I want to hear your aspirations for your own lives, your hopes for your communities and your culture, what you think we can do together in the years to come. All right?

Terima kasih banyak. Anita? Good. I've got my mike here.

Moderator Anita Woo of Malaysia's ntv7 Television Network. Thank you very much, Mr. President. If you may?

President Obama. Well, I'm going to take the first question, and then I think Anita is going to take a question from social media. Oh, this is tough because we have so many outstanding young people. I'll call on this young lady right here, right in the front.

Tell me your name. If you're going to school, tell me what level you're at, what year you are in school, and where you're from.

President Obama's Ambitions as a Young Man

Q. Hi, Mr. President. My name is Sue Kim. I'm from Cambodia, and I went to Institute of Foreign Languages, the Royal University of Phnom Penh. And I've got a very simple question for you. What was your dream when you were in your twenties, and did you achieve it? And if so, how did you achieve it?

President Obama. Well, it's a short question, but it's not a simple one. [*Laughter*] When I was in high school—so, for those of you who don't—are studying under a different system, when I was 15, 16, 17, before I went to the university—I wasn't always the best student. Sometimes, I was enjoying life too much. [*Laughter*] Don't clap. [*Laughter*] This guy is the same way. [*Laughter*] No, no, the—part of it, I was rebelling, which is natural for young people that age. I didn't know my father, and so my family life was complicated. So I didn't always focus on my studies, and that probably carried over into the first 2 years of university.

But around the age of 20, I began to realize that I could have an impact on the world if I applied myself more. I became interested in social policy and government, and I decided that I wanted to work in the nonprofit sector for people who are disadvantaged in the United States. And so I was able to do that for 3 years after I graduated from college. That's how I moved to the city of Chicago. I was hired by a group of churches to work in poor areas to help people get jobs and help improve housing and give young people more opportunity. And that was a great experience for me, and then I—it led me to go to law school and to practice

civil rights law and then ultimately to run for elected office.

And when I think back to my journey, my path, I think the most important thing for me—and maybe the most important thing for all the young people here—is to realize that you really can have an impact on the world; you can achieve your dreams. But in order to do so, you have to focus not so much on a title or how much money you're going to make, you have to focus more on what kind of influence and impact are you going to have on other people's lives, what good can you do in the world.

Now, that may involve starting a business, but if you want to start a business, you should be really excited about the product or the service that you're making. It shouldn't just be, how much money I can make, because the businesspeople that I meet who do amazing things, like Bill Gates, who started Microsoft, or—they're usually people who are really interested in what they do, and they really think that it can make a difference in people's lives.

If you want to go into government, you shouldn't just want to be a particular government official. You should want to go into government because you think it can help educate some children or it can help provide jobs for people who need work.

So I think the most important thing for me was when I started thinking more about other people and how I could have an impact in my larger society and community and wasn't just thinking about myself. That's when I think your dreams can really take off. Because if you're only thinking about you, then your world is small; if you're thinking about others, then your world gets bigger. Okay? Good. Thank you.

Ms. Woo. Thank you, Mr. President. We now have a question from the social media, which we've been collecting over the week.

President Obama. Okay.

Burma/Combating Discrimination

Q. The question comes from our friend—[*inaudible*]—from Burma or Myanmar. And he asks: To Mr. President, what would be your own key words or encouragement for each of us leaders of our next generation while we are cooperating with numerous diversities such as different races, languages, beliefs, and cultures, not only in Myanmar, but also across ASEAN? Thank you.

President Obama. Good. Well, it's a great question. If you look at the biggest source of conflict and war and hardship around the world, one of the most if not the most important reasons is people treating those who are not like them differently. Right? So in Myanmar right now, they're going through a transition after decades of repressive government; they're trying to open things up and make the country more democratic. And that's a very courageous process that they're going through.

But the danger, now that they're democratizing, is that there are different ethnic groups and different religions inside of Myanmar, and if people start organizing politically around their religious identity or around their ethnic identity as opposed to organizing around principles of justice and rule of law and democracy, then you can actually start seeing conflicts inside those countries that could move Myanmar in a very bad direction; in particular, you've got a Muslim minority inside of Myanmar right now that the broader population has historically looked down upon and whose rights are not fully being protected.

Now, that's not unique to Myanmar. Here in Malaysia, this is a majority Muslim country. But then, there are times where those who are non-Muslims find themselves, perhaps, being disadvantaged or experiencing hostility. In the United States, obviously, historically, the biggest conflicts arose around race. And we had to fight a Civil War, and we had to have a civil rights movement over the course of generations, until I could stand before you as a President of African descent. But of course, the job is not done. There is still discrimination and prejudice and ethnic conflict inside the United States that we have to be vigilant against.

So my point is, all of us have within us biases and prejudices of people who are not like us or were not raised in the same faith or come from a different ethnic background. But the world is shrinking. It's getting smaller. You could think

that way when we were all living in—separately in villages and tribes and we didn't have contact with each other. We now have the Internet and smartphones, and our cultures are all colliding. The world has gotten smaller, and no country is going to succeed if part of its population is put on the sidelines because they're discriminated against.

Malaysia won't succeed if non-Muslims don't have opportunity. Myanmar won't succeed if the Muslim population is oppressed. No society is going to succeed if half your population—meaning women—aren't getting the same education and employment opportunities as men. So I think the key point for all of you, especially as young people, is, you should embrace your culture. You should be proud of who you are and your background. And you should appreciate the differences in language and food. And how you worship God is going to be different, and those are things that you should be proud of. But it shouldn't be a tool to look down on somebody else. It shouldn't be a reason to discriminate.

And you have to make sure that you are speaking out against that in your daily life, and as you emerge as leaders, you should be on the side of politics that brings people together rather than drives them apart. That is one of—that is the most important thing for this generation. And part of the way to do that is to be able to stand in other people's shoes and see through their eyes. Almost every religion has within it the basic principle that I, as a Christian, understand from the teachings of Jesus: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Treat people the way you want to be treated. And if you're not doing that and if society is not respecting that basic principle, then we're going backwards instead of going forward.

And this is true all around the world. And sometimes, it's among groups that those of us on the outside, we look—they look exactly the same. In Northern Ireland, there has been a raging conflict—although, they have finally come to arrive at peace—because half or a portion of the population is Catholic, a portion is Protestant. Now, from the outside, you look—why are they arguing? They're both Irish. They speak the same language. It seems as if they'd have nothing to argue about. But that's been a part of Ireland that has been held back and is poor and less developed than the part of Ireland that didn't have that conflict.

In Africa, you go to countries—my father's country of Kenya, where oftentimes, you've seen tribal conflicts; from the outside, you'd think, what are they arguing about? This is a country that has huge potential. They should be growing, but instead, they spend all their time arguing and organizing politically only around tribe and around ethnicity. And then, when one gets on top, they're suspicious, and they're worried that the other might take advantage of them. And when power shifts, then it's payback. And we see that in society after society. The most important thing young people can do is break out of that mindset.

When I was in Korea, I had a chance to—or in Tokyo, rather—I had a chance to see an exhibit with an astronaut, a Japanese astronaut who was at the International Space Station, and it was looking at the entire globe, and they're tracking now what—changing weather patterns, in part because it gives us the ability to respond to disasters quicker. And when you see astronauts from Japan or from the United States or from Russia or others working together, and they're looking down at this planet from a distance, you realize we're all on this little rock in the middle of space, and the differences that seem so important to us from a distance dissolve into nothing.

And so we have to have that same perspective: respecting everybody, treating everybody equally under the law. That has to be a principle that all of you uphold. All right? Good. Great question. Let me call on the—I'm going to go boy, girl, boy, girl so that everybody gets a fair chance. Let's see, hold on. This gentleman right here, right there with the glasses. Yes. There you go.

Q. Hello, Mr. President.

President Obama. Hello.

President Obama's Experience as a Community Organizer

Q. I have a—my name is—[*inaudible*]—and I'm from Malaysia, currently with YES Alumni Malaysia. Well, I have a question. I wonder, what was your first project—community service project that you did in life, and how did the project impact your community? Thank you so much.

President Obama. That's a great question. I told you that when I graduated from college, I wanted to work in poor neighborhoods. And so I moved to Chicago, and I worked. These—this community had gone through some very difficult times. The steel plants there, the steel mills, had closed. A lot of manufacturing was moving out of America or becoming technologically obsolete, these old mills. And so these were areas that had been entirely dependent on steel. And as those jobs left, the communities were being abandoned.

And there was also racial change in the area. They had been predominantly White; then, Blacks and Latinos had moved in. And there was fear among the various groups. So they had a lot of problems. I will tell you this: that what I did was I organized a series of meetings listening to people to find out what they wanted to do something about first. The most immediate problem they saw was, there was a lot of crime that had emerged in the area, but they didn't quite know how to do anything about it. So I organized a meeting with the police commander so that they could file their complaints directly to the police commander and try to get more action to create more safe space in those communities for children and to end people standing on street corners and—because it was depressing the whole community.

Now, here's the main thing I want to tell you. That first meeting, nobody came. It was a complete failure, and I was very depressed, because I thought, well, everybody said that they were concerned about crime, but when I organized the meeting, nobody came. And what it made me realize is, is that if you want to bring about change in a community or in a nation, it's not going to happen overnight. Usually, it's very hard to bring about change, because people are busy in their daily lives. They have things to do. Some of the things I realized was, I hadn't organized the meeting at the right time. It was right around dinner time, and if people were working, they were coming home and picking up their kids, and they couldn't get to the meeting fast enough and—right?

So, first of all, you've got to try to get people involved. And a lot of people are busy in their own lives, or they don't think it's going to make a difference, or they're scared if they're speaking out against authority. And many of the problems that we're facing, like trying to create jobs or better opportunity or dealing with poverty or dealing with the environment, these are problems that have been going on for decades. And so to think that somehow you're going to change it in a day or a week, and then if it doesn't happen, you just give up, well, then you definitely won't succeed.

So the most important thing that I learned as a young person trying to bring about change is you have to be persistent and you have to get more people involved and you have to form relationships with different groups and different organizations. And you have to listen to people about what they're feeling and what they're concerned about and build trust. And then, you have to try to find a small part of the problem and get success on that first so that maybe from there, you can start something else and make it bigger and make it bigger, until over time, you are really making a difference in your community and in that problem.

But you can't be impatient. And the problem—the great thing about young people is, they're impatient. The biggest problem with young people is, they're impatient. Right? It's a strength, because it's what makes you want to change things. But sometimes, you can be disappointed if change doesn't happen right away, and then you just give up. And you just have to stay with it and learn from your failures, as well as your successes. Okay?

Anita.

President Obama's Hopes for His Legacy

Ms. Woo. Mr. President, thank you very much. We have a question from our friend in Singapore. His name is Stanley Ong. He asks, what is the legacy you wish to leave behind?

President Obama. I've still got 2½ years left as President, so I hope he's not rushing me. [*Laughter*] But what is true is, is that as President of the United States, you have so many issues coming at you every day, but sometimes, I try to step back and think about 20 years from now, when I look back, what will I be most proud of or what do I think will be most important in the work that I've done.

Now, my most important legacy is Malia and Sasha, who are turning out to be wonderful young people. So your children—if you're a parent, the most important legacy you have is great children—and I have those—who are happy and healthy, and I think they're going to do great things. Another important legacy is being a good husband. So I've tried to do that. That's important, because if you don't do those things well, then everything else you're going to have some problems with. [*Laughter*]

But I think as President, what I've tried to do in the United States is really focus on how do you create opportunity for all people. And when I first came into office, we were in a huge financial crisis that had hit the entire world. And it was the worst crisis that the United States had had since the 1930s. So the first thing I had to do was just make sure that we stopped the crisis and start allowing the economy to recover. And we've now created more than 9 million jobs, and the economy is beginning to improve for a lot of people. But what you've also seen is a trend in the United States, but also around the world, in which even when the economy grows, it tends to benefit a lot of people at the very top, but the vast majority of people, they don't benefit as much. And you're starting to see bigger and bigger gaps in inequality and in wealth and in opportunity.

And that's true not just in the United States, it's true in Europe; it's long been true in parts of Asia; it's been true in Latin America. And I believe that economies work best when growth and development is broad based, when it's shared, when ordinary people, if they work hard and they take responsibility, they can succeed. Not everybody is going to be rich, but everybody should be able to live a good life. Not everybody is going to be a billionaire, but everybody should be able to have a nice home and educate their children and feel some sense of security.

So that's not something that I can do by myself as President of the United States, but everything that I do—whether it's providing more help for people to go to college; or giving early childhood education to young children, because we know that the younger children get some additional—initial schooling, especially poor children, the better off they'll do in school for all the years to come; to the work that we're trying to do in providing health care for all Americans so that they don't experience a crisis when somebody in their family gets sick—all of those efforts are with the objective of making sure that ordinary people, if they work hard and they act responsibly, they can succeed.

And internationally, my main goal has been to work with other partners to promote a system of rules so that conflicts can be resolved peacefully, so that nations observe basic rules of behavior, so that whether you're a big country or a small country, you know that there are certain principles that are observed, that might doesn't just make right, but that there's a set of ideals and there's justice both inside countries and between countries.

Now, that means trying to end the proliferation of nuclear weapons, which are a threat to humanity. And we've made progress in that front, me negotiating the reduction of our nuclear stockpiles with the Russians and trying to resolve through diplomacy the problem that Iran has been trying to pursue nuclear weapons and working with countries like Malaysia to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

That means working to get chemical weapons out of Syria. It means trying to promote a just peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It means opening up to Burma—and I was the first President to visit there—and seeing if we could take advantage of the opportu-

nity with Aung San Suu Kyi's release to create a country that was a responsible part of the world order.

Sometimes our efforts have been successful; sometimes, just as I told this young man here, my efforts initially haven't been as successful and I've had to keep on trying. And I am confident that when I'm done as President, there's still going to be parts of the world that are having war, that are having conflict, that are oppressing their own people. So I'm not going to solve all these problems. I've got to leave some work for all of you. [*Laughter*]

But what I do hope is, is that I will have made progress on each of those fronts so that if, when I leave, I can say there are a few more countries that are democracies now, and the United States helped; if there are countries where I can say—or areas of the world where I can say we avoided conflict between two countries because we helped to mediate a dispute. I'll be proud of that. If there are countries where the spotlight has been shined internationally on the oppression of a minority group and it has forced that country to change its practices, that will be a success.

But I don't consider—I don't think I can do that by myself, of course. I can only do that not only with the cooperation and consultation of other leaders, but it's also other citizens of the world—all of you and people in various regions—they've got to want more justice and more peace in order for us to achieve it.

Sometimes, the United States is viewed as, on the one hand, the cause of everybody's problem, or on the other hand, the United States is expected to solve everybody's problem. And we are a big, powerful nation, and we take our responsibilities very seriously, but we can only do so much. Ultimately, the people in these countries themselves have to partner with us and—because we have problems in our own country that we have to solve. But hopefully, I'm also lifting up certain universal principles and ideals that all of us can embrace and share.

All right, it's a woman's turn. It's a young woman's turn. I've got to—let's see who is back here. No, it's a young lady's turn. Okay, this young lady right here—since the microphone is right there.

Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative/Climate Change

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President, and welcome to Malaysia. So gathering from what you've said, I think it's a shared consensus that youth worldwide can be the catalyst, to plant the seeds for an early conditioning on certain global issues, yes. So my question is, how exactly can America lead us youth internationally in championing such issues, for example, climate change, women empowerment, poverty eradication—particularly, to bring the human race together? It appears that a lot of policies are being put in place, but a lot of these policies that have been put in place by the Gen Xers, the baby boomers. People like us, the Gen Ys, we don't have a say in these policies, but we are supposed to champion them, so how are we supposed to do all these things?

President Obama. Well, first of all, I'm trying to figure out which generation I am. [*Laughter*] You got baby boomers, then Gen X, and then this is Gen Y—we're on Y? Is zed—is Z, are they here yet, or—that's next?

Well, first of all, just to be very specific, as I said in my speech, part of the reason that I like to meet with young people is to get their suggestions and their ideas. But then what we try to do is set up a process and a network of young leaders who can share ideas with each other and with us, to let us know how they think we can empower you.

So coming out of this meeting, there will be mechanisms through social media and in our Embassies in each of the 10 ASEAN countries where we're going to be bringing together youth leaders to talk to each other about their plans, what their priorities are, how they think the United States can be most helpful. And we're going get—we're going to take your suggestions.

And let's take the example of something like climate change. The voice of young people on this issue is so important because you are the ones who are going to have to deal with the consequences of this most significantly. I rode

with Prime Minister Najib from our press conference to the new MaGIC Center that's been set up here—entrepreneurial center—that came out of our global entrepreneur summit that was hosted here in Malaysia. And on the ride over, it hadn't started raining yet, but you could tell it was going to be raining soon. And he said that here in Malaysia, you've already seen a change in weather patterns. It used to be that the dry season and the rainy season was very clear. Now it all just kind of is blurring together.

Now, not all of that can be directly attributed precisely to climate change. But when you look at what's been happening all across the country or all around the world, there's no doubt that weather patterns are changing. It is getting warmer. That is going to have impacts in terms of more flooding, more drought, displacement. It could affect food supplies. It could affect the incidence of diseases. Coastal communities could be severely affected. And what happens when humans are placed under stress is, the likelihood of conflict increases.

There is a theory that one of the things that happened in Syria to trigger the protests that resulted in the terrible, violent efforts to suppress them by President Asad was repeated drought in Syria that drove people off their land so they could no longer afford to make the traditional living that they had made. Now, whether that's true or not, we don't know precisely. But what we do know is, is that you see in communities that are under severe weather pressure—drought, famine, food prices increasing—they're more likely to be in conflict.

And you're going to have to deal with this, unless we do something about it. So the question is, well, what can we do? Every country should be coming up with a Climate Action Plan to try to reduce its carbon emissions. In Southeast Asia, one of the most important issues is deforestation. In Indonesia and Malaysia, what you've seen is huge portions of tropical forests that actually use carbon and so reduce the effects of climate change, reduce carbon being released into the atmosphere and warming the planet—they're just being shredded because of primarily the palm oil industry. And there are large business interests behind that industry.

Now, the question is, are we going to, in each of those countries, say how can we help preserve these forests while using a different approach to economic development that does less to damage the atmosphere? And that means engaging, then, with the various stakeholders. You've got to talk to the businesses involved. You've got to talk to the government, the communities who may be getting jobs. Because their first priority is feeding themselves, so if you just say, we've got to stop cutting down the forests, but you don't have an alternative opportunity for people, then they may just ignore you. So there are going to be all kinds of pieces just to that one part of the problem. And each country may have a different element to it.

The point, though, is, is that you have to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. You have to say, this is important. You don't have to be a climate science expert, but you can educate yourselves on the issue. You can discuss it with your peer groups. You can organize young people to interact with international organizations that are already dealing with this issue. You can help to publicize it. You can educate your parents, friends, coworkers. And through that process, you can potentially change policy.

So it may take—it will take years. It will not happen next week. But our hope is, is that through this network that we're going to be developing, that we can be a partner with you in that process. All right?

So I just want to check how many—how much time do we have here? Who is in charge? [*Laughter*]

Ms. Woo. We've got time, Mr. President.

President Obama. How much time?

Ms. Woo. A couple more questions.

President Obama. A couple more questions, all right, because I just want to make sure that I'm being fair here. All right, it's a guy's turn. Oh, the—let's see. All right, how about this guy, because I like his hair cut, the guy with the spikey hair right there. All right. [*Laughter*]

Malaysian Economic Development/U.S. Economy/Chinese Economic Development

Q. Okay, thanks. *Selamat sejahtera,* Mr. President. My name is—[*inaudible*]. I am an event organizer and the curator of TEDxYouth@KL. In your opinion, what are the top three advice to fellow Malaysians and Government to become a developed country in 6 years' time? As this is one of country's visions, and I think it's important for fellow Malaysians to contribute together in order to achieve that. Thank you.

President Obama. Well, I had an extensive conversation with Prime Minister Najib about his development strategy. First of all, Malaysia is now a middle-income country. It's done much better than many other countries in per capita income and growth over the last two decades, and there's been some wise leadership that has helped to promote Malaysian exports and to help to train its people.

You've got high literacy rates, which is critically important. Investing in people is the single most important thing in the knowledge economy. Right? Traditionally, wealth was defined by land and natural resources. Today, all the—the most important resources is between our ears. And Malaysia has made a good investment in young people. So that continues to be, I think, the most important strategy for growth in the 21st century.

And in the United States, my main focus is improving the—our education system and lifelong learning. Because part of what's changed in the economy, in the 20th century, you got a job at a company, you might stay there for 30 years; things didn't change that much. Now you may be at one company, and that company may be absorbed, and you might have to retrain for a new job because the thing that you were doing before has been made obsolete because of technology.

So we have to keep on investing in not only elementary school and secondary school and even universities, but in the United States, for example, we have a system of community colleges and job training where somebody who's in their thirties or even forties or fifties can go back, get retrained, get more skills, adapt to a new industry, and then be a productive citizen. That's a critical investment that needs to be made.

The second thing that I know Prime Minister Najib is focused on—and this applies throughout the region—is if you want to move to the next level of development, then you have to open up an economy to innovation and entrepreneurship. The initial push for growth in Southeast Asia initially started with exporting raw materials and then shifted to manufacturing and light assembly and being part of the global supply chain. And that's all a very important ladder into development. But now a lot of wealth is being created by new products and new ideas.

And at least in the United States, for example, we don't want to just assemble the latest smartphone, we want to invent the latest smartphone. We want to invent the apps and the content for those smartphones. And then, we have an asset that whoever is manufacturing it, some of the value is still flowing to us. Well, what that requires then is changes in the economy to make it more open, to make it more entrepreneurial. Their—some of the old systems have to be broken down.

Now, different countries in ASEAN and different countries around the world are at different stages of development. In some countries, the most important thing for development is just basic rule of law and something that I said earlier, which is making sure that the law applies to everybody in the same way. I believe if Malaysia is going to take that next leap, then it's going to have to make sure that the economy is one where everybody has the opportunity—regardless of where they started—to succeed. And that energy has to be unleashed. And I think that—I think Prime Minister Najib understands that.

And the trade agreement that we're trying to create, the TPP, part of what we're trying to do is to create higher standards for labor protection, higher standards for environmental protection, more consistent protection of intellectual property—because increasingly that's the next phase of wealth. All those things require more transparency and more accountability and

more rule of law, and I think that it's entirely consistent with Malaysia moving into the next phase.

Now, it's hard to change old ways of doing things, and that's true for every country. I mean, China right now, after unprecedented growth over the last 20 years, realizes it's got to change its whole strategy. It's been so export oriented, but now they start—they're starting to realize that if they want to continue to grow, they've got to develop consumer markets inside their own country.

And what that means is, is that they've got to give workers more ability to spend on consumer goods and that they have to have a social safety net so that workers aren't just saving all the time, because if they get sick, they don't have any social insurance programs and they don't have any retirement programs. And so they're starting to make these shifts, but these are hard shifts.

Even in a country that's controlled by the central party that's not democratic, it's still hard because certain people have gotten accustomed to and done very well with an export-driven strategy. So when you shift, there's going to be somebody who resists. And that's true in every country. It's true in the United States. We've got to change how we do things. And when you try to change, somebody somewhere is benefiting from the status quo. Malaysia is no different. But I'm confident that you can make it happen.

All right. I'll take two more questions. And it's a young lady's turn. So, guys, you can all put down your hands. [*Laughter*] Let's see—this young lady with the yellow—[*inaudible*].

Q. Good morning. My name is Rita, from Indonesia.

President Obama. Apa kabar?

Q. Baik-baik saja.

President Obama. Baik.

President Obama's Definition of Happiness

Q. Well, okay, I have a very short question. What does happiness means to you?

President Obama. What does happiness mean to me?

Q. Yes.

President Obama. Wow, you guys—that's a big, philosophical question. Well, the—I mentioned earlier my family, and it really is true that the older I get, the more—when I think about when I'm on my deathbed—I mean, I don't think about this all the time. [*Laughter*] I don't want you to think—I'm still fairly young. But when I think, at the end of my life and I'm looking back, what will have been most important to me, I think it's the time I will have spent with the people I love. And so that makes me happy.

But I also think that, as I get older, what's most important to me is feeling as if I've been true to my beliefs and that I've lived with some integrity. Now, that doesn't always make you happy in the sense of you're laughing or just enjoying life, because sometimes, being true to your beliefs is uncomfortable. Sometimes, doing things that you think is right may put you in some conflict with somebody. Sometimes, people may not appreciate it, and it may be inconvenient.

But I think that part of being satisfied at least with life as you get older is feeling as if you know that every day you wake up and there's certain things you believe in—in, for example, respecting other people or showing kindness to others or trying to promote justice or whatever it is that you think is best in you—and that at the end of each day, you can say, okay, you know what, I was consistent with what I say I'm about, what I say I believe in, the image I have of myself.

And when I'm uncomfortable is when I think, I didn't do my best today. Maybe I didn't speak out when I should have spoken out. Maybe I didn't work as hard on this issue as I should have worked. Then, I'm tossing and turning, and I'm—I don't feel good.

And I think that having that kind of integrity is important, where you can look at yourself in the mirror and you can say, okay, I am who I want—who I say I want to be. And nobody is perfect, and everybody is going to make mistakes, but I think if you feel as if you're always striving towards your ideals, then you'll feel okay at the end. All right?

Okay, last question. And it's—let's see. No, no, it's a guy's question. Women, put down your hands. [*Laughter*] It's the—okay, I'll call on this gentleman here because he—there you go, with the glasses.

Importance of Treating Others With Respect

Q. Well, good evening, Mr. President Obama. My name is—[*inaudible*]—from Malaysia. I'm an undergrad from University of Malaya, under the faculty of arts and social sciences. So my question is, in your position right now, what values that you uphold the most that you think is very important, that makes you what you are today? And what do you wish to bring that value to the young peoples of today so that they can change the world to become a better world? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, thank you. I'm going to take another question after that, because I've already answered this question. Let—no, wait, wait, wait, let me—[*laughter*]—let me explain the—what I think is most important is showing people respect who you disagree with, right? And so, for example, there's a note over there—I don't know what those young people are putting a note about—but I think that the basic idea that if somebody is not like you, if they look differently than you, if they believe differently than you, that you are treating them as you want to be treated. If you are applying those ideas, I think you're going to be halfway there in terms of solving most of the world's problems.

And a lot of that is around some of the traditional divisions that we have in our society: race, ethnicity, religion, gender. Treat people with respect, whoever they are, and expect your governments to treat everybody with respect. And if you do that, then you're going to be okay.

All right, last question. Young ladies—now, wait, wait, wait, everybody put down their hands for a second. Okay, now I've heard from—I've had an Indonesian, a Malaysian, a Cambodian, Myanmar. Thailand didn't get called on. So I think—all right, Thailand's raised. Where—okay. And the Philippines—well, see, I can't call on everybody. [*Laughter*] Thailand said—they were the first ones to shout. So go ahead, this young lady right here.

Death of President Obama's Mother/President Obama's Greatest Regrets

Q. Sawadtee khaa. Hi, President. Very short question. What the things that you regret nowadays that you should have done in the past?

President Obama. What are the things that I regret? Oh, the list is so long. [*Laughter*] I regret calling on you, because now I'm going to be telling everybody my business. [*Laughter*] No, I'm just joking about that. [*Laughter*]

I'm now 52. And I still feel pretty good. I'm a little gray haired. But I will tell you two things I regret. One is very specific, one is more general. The specific thing is I regret not having spent more time with my mother. Because she died early. She got cancer and—right around when she was my age; actually, she was just a year older than me—older than I am now. She died. It happened very fast, in about 6 months. And I realized that—there was a stretch of time from when I was, let's say, 20, until I was 30, where I was so busy with my own life that I didn't always reach out and communicate with her and ask her how she was doing and tell her about things. I was nice, and I'd call and write once in a while. But this goes to what I was saying earlier about what you remember in the end, I think, is the people you love. I realized that I didn't, every single day, or at least more often, just spend time with her and find out what she was thinking and what she was doing, because she had been such an important part of my life.

Now, that's natural as young people. As you grow up, you become independent. But for those of you who have not called their parents lately, I would just say that that is something, actually, I regret.

The more general answer is, I regret wasting time. I think when I was young, I spent a lot of time on things that I realize now were not very important, and I wish I had used my time more wisely.

And so—now, I don't want people to spend every minute of every day working all the time, because you have to enjoy life and you have to

have friends and you have to appreciate all that life has to offer. But I do think that in America, at least, but now I think worldwide, we spend an awful lot of time on diversions—watching TV or playing video games or—and all that time, when you add it all up, I say to myself, I could have spent more time learning a foreign language, or I could have spent more time working on a project that was important. And I think it would be useful to—for all of you to consider how you're spending your time and make sure that you're making every day count.

Let me just say this by way of thank you to all of you. I think you've asked terrific questions. I'm so impressed with all of you and what you have done and what you'll do in the future. I do want you to feel optimistic about your future. Even though I've told you about some problems like climate change that seem so big now, I always say—we get White House interns to come in, and they work at the White House, and they're there for 6 months, and then I usually speak to them at the end of 6 months. And I always tell them that despite how hard sometimes the world seems to be and all you see on television is war and conflict and poverty and violence, the truth is that if you had to choose when to be born, not knowing where or who you would be, in all of human history, now would be the time. Because the world is less violent, it is healthier, it is wealthier, it is more tolerant, and it offers more opportunity than any time in human history for more people than any time in human history.

Now, that doesn't mean that there aren't still terrible things happening around the world or in this region or—we still have things like human trafficking. And we still have terrible abuse of children. And there are conflicts. And so there are all kinds of things that we're going to have to tackle and deal with. But you should know that with each successive generation, things have improved just a little bit. And over time, that little bit adds to a lot. And it's now up to you, the next generation, to make sure that 20 years from now or 30 years from now, people look back and say, wow, things are a lot better now than they were back then.

And there will still be problems 20 or 30 years from now also. But they will be different problems, because you will have solved many of the problems that exist today. And America wants to be a partner with you in that process, so good luck.

Thank you, everybody.

Ms. Woo. Thank you very much, Mr. President. It's been a wonderful opportunity, and we appreciate it very much.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:54 p.m. in Tunku Chancellor Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Kelsey V. Grab; King Mu'adzam Shah Abdul Halim and Prime Minister Razak Najib of Malaysia; Koichi Wakata, Mission 39 commander, International Space Station; and Member of Parliament and Leader of the National League for Democracy Party Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, brother-in-law Konrad Ng, and Mr. Ng's parents Howard and Joan Ng.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia

April 27, 2014

The Honorable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia and The Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States of America held a bilateral meeting on 27 April 2014 in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

The two leaders reflected on the historic nature of President Obama's State Visit to Malaysia, the first Presidential visit in 48 years, and the resilience of bilateral relations between Malaysia and the United States. Both leaders reaffirmed their mutual commitment to fur-

ther enhance Malaysia-U.S. engagement on issues of bilateral, regional and international importance.

Reflecting on the search for missing flight MH370 which carried passengers and crew from 14 nations, including Malaysia and the United States, the Prime Minister expressed Malaysia's gratitude to President Obama for the United States' unwavering support. Malaysia is heartened by the presence of the United States from day one in the ongoing operations to locate flight MH370. The support received exemplifies the strong ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

Recognizing the growing cooperation between the two countries in a wide range of areas, Prime Minister Najib and President Obama decided to elevate the Malaysia-U.S. relationship to a Comprehensive Partnership with the aim of advancing the two countries' common interests and the shared values of the people of the United States and Malaysia. Under the Comprehensive Partnership, both countries commit to further strengthening dialogue mechanisms in key areas including political and diplomatic cooperation, trade and investment, education and people-to-people ties, security and defense cooperation, as well as collaboration on the environment, science and technology, and energy.

Political and Diplomatic Cooperation

The Prime Minister and the President welcomed the increasing high-level interaction between the two countries in recent years, including the numerous Cabinet-level exchanges of visits, and encouraged continued dialogue at various levels. Both sides also committed to reinvigorate the Malaysia-U.S. Senior Officials Dialogue as a key forum to pursue the implementation of the Comprehensive Partnership through regular consultations.

The Prime Minister appreciated the United States' presence in Asia which contributes to peace, stability and prosperity in the region. President Obama reiterated the United States' strong support for the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the importance of East Asian regional institutions. President Obama also welcomed Malaysia's upcoming chairmanship of ASEAN in 2015 and expressed confidence that under Malaysia's stewardship, ASEAN would further its regional ambition of economic integration.

The Prime Minister and the President acknowledged the importance of peace and stability for the security and economic prosperity of nations. The leaders exchanged views on recent developments in the South China Sea and affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, including critical waterways in the South China Sea. The two leaders underscored the importance of all parties concerned resolving their territorial and maritime disputes through peaceful means, including international arbitration, as warranted, and in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The two leaders highlighted the importance of all parties concerned avoiding the use of force, intimidation, or coercion, and exercising self-restraint in the conduct of activities.

The Prime Minister and the President reaffirmed the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in enhancing mutual trust and confidence amongst all parties concerned and recognized the need for ASEAN and China to work expeditiously towards the establishment of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

The two leaders underscored their commitment to promoting respect for human rights, as well as the importance of a vibrant and independent civil society consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and international human rights law. Respect for diversity, respect for the freedom to express different views and practice different faiths, respect for all religions and respect for the rights of all in the populations are essential to healthy and prosperous democracies.

Both leaders welcomed efforts to promote tolerance and inter-faith understanding and

counter violence and extremism. In relation to this, the two leaders also appreciated the goals of the Global Movement of Moderates to promote greater understanding and moderation among people of all faiths by expanding government-to-government and people-to-people engagement.

President Obama commended Malaysia's leading role in facilitating the Southern Philippines Bangsamoro peace process that led to the recent signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro.

Both leaders welcomed the bilateral work agreement on the gainful employment of spouses of embassy and consulate officials which provides benefits for diplomatic families of both sides as well as the host country.

Economic and Trade Cooperation

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama celebrated the strong economic links between Malaysia and the United States, including bilateral trade amounting to U.S. $40 billion annually. Prime Minister Najib and President Obama applauded the progress made so far in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement negotiations. They reaffirmed their commitment to work together to resolve the remaining issues and conclude the high-standard agreement as soon as possible so that both countries' businesses, workers, farmers, and consumers could begin benefitting. Both leaders also discussed the importance of enhancing multilateral cooperation to promote trade, investment and inclusive growth in fora such as ASEAN, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Noting that the United States was the largest source of foreign investment in Malaysia in 2013, the Prime Minister acknowledged the beneficial and significant role of U.S. investors in the development of Malaysia's economy. This close cooperation has resulted in support for Malaysian Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) through linkages between U.S. companies and Malaysian SMEs, sharing technology, promoting innovation and contributing to Malaysia's economic transformation agenda.

The President similarly highlighted the United States' openness to foreign investment, and noted the mutually beneficial nature of Malaysian investment in the United States. The President encouraged Malaysian participation in SelectUSA, a U.S. Government initiative to promote and facilitate inbound business investment and a key partner and support system for potential Malaysian investors, including SMEs, seeking investment opportunities in the United States.

Both leaders emphasized the importance of a strong intellectual property rights regime, to promote innovation and for the mutual benefit of innovators and consumers. Such a regime has already helped support investments in new growth areas including in emerging and high technology sectors as well as high value-added, knowledge-based and skills-intensive industries which should generate more high income job opportunities in both countries and support Malaysia's aspiration to become a developed nation by the year 2020. The two leaders expressed confidence that the ongoing economic reforms in Malaysia and the economic recovery of the United States would accelerate economic growth, opening greater opportunities for trade and creating employment in both countries.

Education and People-to-People

Recognizing people-to-people relations as the foundation of strong bilateral ties, the two leaders affirmed their shared intention to foster better understanding, goodwill and friendship between the peoples of both countries.

Reflecting the Prime Minister and President Obama's shared aspiration to enhance people-to-people interaction first discussed in 2010, the two leaders celebrated the success of the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program. Likening the spirit of the Fulbright ETA program to the Peace Corps program, which ran for two decades in Malaysia, Prime Minister Najib and President Obama announced that the governments of Malaysia and the United States have extended the Fulbright ETA Program for another three years.

The two leaders applauded the network of eight Lincoln Corners in six different Malaysian states and Kuala Lumpur that host hundreds of educational programs and promote connections between Malaysia and the United States. Both leaders also recognized the value of sharing the rich cultural heritages of our two countries through exchanges of displays in art galleries and museums in both countries.

The Prime Minister and President Obama welcomed the establishment of the Malaysia-America Foundation and the exploring of opportunities to establish sister city relationships between the two sides.

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama acknowledged that university level linkages between the United States and Malaysia continue to grow. Both sides encouraged the expansion of research and study partnerships between U.S. and Malaysian institutions of higher education.

Both leaders emphasized the importance of youth empowerment, particularly in promoting entrepreneurship, environmental protection, education, and civic participation in Malaysia and across the region, including through such programs as the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre (MaGIC) and activities under the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI).

Defense and Security

President Obama welcomed Malaysia's commitment to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction with the endorsement of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Statement of Interdiction Principles.

The two leaders reaffirmed the longstanding military-to-military cooperation between Malaysia and the United States which provides a solid foundation for enhancements across a broad front. Both leaders acknowledged the value of continuous dialogue on regional and global security challenges as well as coordination on military matters through the Malaysia-U.S. Strategic Talks (MUSST) and the Bilateral Training and Consultative Group (BiTACG).

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama decided to continue discussions on opportunities for practical future cooperation in the maritime domain, including ways the United States could support the development of Malaysia's maritime enforcement capacity through the provision of training, equipment and expertise.

President Obama applauded Malaysia's troop contributions to peacekeeping in United Nations missions, including in Afghanistan and Lebanon and thanked Malaysia for its successful deployment of a military medical team in Afghanistan. Both sides committed to strengthen cooperation in peacekeeping training under the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) and welcomed U.S. support for the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre.

The two leaders welcomed the expansion of ties between the defense industries of Malaysia and the United States, which contribute to Malaysia's economic development. Both sides committed to work further to nurture and deepen defence bilateral engagements, including promoting the interoperability between the two armed forces.

Malaysia and the United States noted with satisfaction the progress in various ongoing scientific sectors, including cooperation to raise awareness and capacity in biosecurity laboratories and research facilities in Malaysia dealing with biological threats. These activities reflect a shared commitment to the Global Health Security Agenda, which seeks to accelerate progress toward a world safe and secure from threats posed by infectious disease.

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama expressed a firm commitment towards enhancing cooperation between their two countries in trade and investment. Among the areas of interest are customs administrative matters and to this end would therefore encourage officials engaged in the negotiations to expedite the early conclusion of the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement. The two leaders are also committed to work toward finalizing the memorandum of understanding on immigration information exchange.

Prime Minister Najib and President Obama also decided to consult on Malaysia's interest in meeting the statutory requirements for participation in the Visa Waiver Program. As a first step,

the United States has committed to provide technical briefings on security requirements and information sharing agreements this year.

Recalling the Memorandum of Understanding on Transnational Crime signed by both sides in 2012, the two leaders look forward to convening the inaugural Joint Working Group Meeting to review the efficiency and effectiveness of our law enforcement cooperation.

The two leaders decided that Malaysia and the United States would strengthen cooperation in humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and management, including exploring capacity building initiatives to increase preparedness in handling natural and man-made disasters.

Environment, Science and Technology, and Energy Cooperation

The Prime Minister and President Obama welcomed the active cooperation between Malaysia and the United States in science and technology following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Science and Technology Cooperation in 2010. Pursuant to the MOU, the leaders noted the establishment of focus areas on biotechnology, marine science, climate studies, conservation science and management under the Joint Committee of Science and Technology.

The Prime Minister highlighted to President Obama the initiatives under the Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council (GSIAC), a joint New York Academy of Sciences and Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) forum with a mandate to develop science, technology and innovation strategies to achieve Malaysia's vision 2020.

Malaysia recognized the U.S. Government's tremendous role as an important partner of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI). The Prime Minister conveyed his appreciation to President Obama for United States' contributions of more than U.S $60 million in technical and financial assistance and capacity building programs to CTI member countries.

Noting the shared visions of the two countries to develop a stronger bio-based economy to ensure sustainable growth, both leaders recognized expanded private sector research collaboration and cooperation in biotechnology.

The Prime Minister sought the United States' support to build Malaysian knowledge and expertise to develop green technology and thanked President Obama for U.S. assistance in creating Malaysia's newly announced green technology development strategy and clean energy cooperation to date under the U.S. Asia Pacific Comprehensive Energy Partnership.

The Prime Minister and President Obama reiterated a common commitment to the conservation of biodiversity and agreed to strengthen cooperation in addressing illegal wildlife trade.

Conclusion

Looking ahead, both leaders pledged their commitment to elevate the Malaysia-U.S. bilateral cooperation to a Comprehensive Partnership that would cover wide-ranging areas for the expansion of trade and investment, security and defense, education, science and technology, energy, and people-to-people relations, for the collective benefit of both countries.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks on Commercial Agreements Between United States and Malaysian Companies in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
April 28, 2014

Selamat pagi. Please, everybody have a seat. Well, it's a great pleasure to be here with Prime Minister Najib. Before I leave to my next stop on this tour, I thought it was entirely appropriate for us to end my wonderful visit here in Malaysia with an event that directly relates to jobs, business, the well-being of our people.

Yesterday we agreed to forge a new comprehensive partnership between Malaysia and the United States, and that includes working to expand our economic ties. In the United States, our Government goes to bat every day for American companies that are trying to export or do business abroad. We advocate for them. We help facilitate deals like this. And today, we're selling more American exports around the world than ever before.

I want to congratulate these American companies for completing these important commercial deals. Together, these three deals—in aviation, biotech, and insurance—are worth nearly $2 billion. It means these companies will be doing more business in Malaysia and selling more exports marked "Made in America." These deals support American jobs in places like Ohio and North Carolina. And companies that export often pay better wages, so it's a good day for American workers as well.

The United States is already the largest foreign investor in Malaysia, and Malaysia is one of the fastest growing investors in the United States. And I want to do even more business together. And I know the Prime Minister agrees. So these deals reflect our commitment to stepping up our game—competing harder, investing more—not only in each other's countries, but across the region.

And finally, today reminds us that we need to do everything we can to promote more trade and ties like this. And that includes reducing some of the existing barriers to trade and investment and completing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is going to open up more markets to our exports and support good jobs.

So I want to thank Prime Minister Najib for being here and for his commitment to expanding the economic ties between our countries. I want to thank these outstanding business leaders behind us for the great work that they do and the jobs they support back home in the United States. Here in Asia and around the world, I'm going to keep advocating on behalf of American companies and American workers so that we continue to see more growth and prosperity not only in our own country, but around the world.

And with that, we're going to let them sign the agreements. Congratulations. Thanks. All right.

[*At this point, commercial agreements were signed by General Electric Co. Global Growth and Operations Vice Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer John G. Rice of the U.S., and AirAsia Group Chief Executive Officer Tony Fernandes of Malaysia; Verdezyne, Inc., President and Chief Executive Officer E. William Radany of the U.S., and Sime Darby Berhad President and Group Chief Executive Mohd Bakke Salleh of Malaysia; and Metlife, Inc., Asia President Christopher G. Townsend of the U.S., and AmBank Group Berhad Chairman of the Board Azman Hashim of Malaysia.*]

Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:24 a.m. at the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia.

The President's News Conference With President Benigno S. Aquino III of the Philippines in Manila, Philippines
April 28, 2014

Moderator. Good afternoon. The President of the Republic of the Philippines and the President of the United States of America will now conduct a joint press conference. His Excellency Benigno S. Aquino III, President, Republic of the Philippines, will deliver a statement.

President Aquino. Your Excellency, President Obama, President of the United States of America, his official delegation, members of the Cabinet present, members of the press, ladies and gentlemen: Good afternoon.

Today the Philippines welcomes President Obama and his delegation on his first state visit to the Philippines. The United States is a key ally, a strategic partner, and a reliable friend of the Philippines.

With this visit, we reaffirm the deep partnership between our countries, one founded on democratic values, mutual interest in our shared history and aspirations, and one that will definitely give us the momentum to propel our peoples to even greater heights.

We witnessed the most recent and tangible manifestations of this in the immediate outpouring of assistance from the Government of the United States and the American people in the aftermath—excuse me, aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan or Yolanda and your Nation's clear expression of solidarity with the typhoon survivors.

Mr. President, in your State of the Union Address earlier this year, you spoke of how American volunteers and troops were greeted with gratitude in the affected areas. Today I reiterate formally: The Filipino people will never forget such kindness and compassion. On behalf of my countrymen, I thank the United States of America once more for being a true friend to our people.

The friendship and partnership between our countries, however, are evident not only in times of crisis and immediate need, but also in other aspects of our relations. Our defense alliance has been a cornerstone of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region for more than 60 years. And our strategic partnership spans a broad range of areas of cooperation, contributing to the growth and prosperity of both our nations and fostering closer bonds between our peoples.

As such, President Obama and I met today with a shared resolve to ensure that our deepening relations are attuned to the realities and needs that have emerged in the 21st century, which affect not only our two countries, but also the entire community of nations.

I thank President Obama for the U.S.'s support for our Government's efforts in modernizing and enhancing its defense capabilities. The Philippines-U.S. enhanced defense cooperation agreement takes our security cooperation to a higher level of engagement, reaffirms our country's commitment to mutual defense and security, and promotes regional peace and stability.

Both President Obama and I shared the conviction that territorial and maritime disputes in the Asia-Pacific region should be settled peacefully based on international law. We affirm that arbitration is an open, friendly, and peaceful approach to seeking a just and durable solution. We also underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Declaration of Conduct and the expeditious conclusion of a substantive and legally binding code of conduct in the South China Sea, all towards fostering peace and stability in our part of the world.

We likewise welcome the active participation of the United States in regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN regional forum and the East Asia Summit.

Typhoon Haiyan showed the entire world how vulnerable the Philippines as well as other developing countries are to natural disasters. As such, humanitarian assistance and disaster response is an essential component of our cooperation. As the United States and American people have always been ready to support us in the aftermath of disasters, so too do we look forward to the continued cooperation of the United States and the rest of our partners in the international community as we undertake the task of building back better the communities affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

This morning we made a promising start as we discussed how our partnership can be enhanced through building climate-resilient communities. These kind of strong communities are important not only in withstanding disasters, but also in fostering inclusive growth across the entire country.

President Obama and I recognize the importance of strong economic engagement for the continued growth of both the Philippines and the United States.

On this note, we expressed our appreciation for the U.S.'s support for our Government's programs under the Partnership for Growth

framework, which enhances the policy environment for economic growth through U.S. $145 million total plan contribution from the USAID. U.S. support is also coursed through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which supports the implementation of projects and road infrastructure, poverty reduction, and good governance, with the $434 million grant from 2011 to 2016.

Recently, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration reinstated the Philippines to a category 1 status. This will redound to mutual benefit for our countries from opening more routes for travel between the United States and the Philippines to creating more business opportunities to facilitating increased tourism and business travel.

We welcome the substantive agreement between our countries on the terms and concessions for the U.S. to support the Philippines' request for the extension of special treatment for our rice imports until 2017.

We also discussed the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is a high-standard trade agreement that will shape the global and regional economic architecture in the 21st century. The Philippines is working to assert in how participation in TPP can be realized.

The signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro last March 27 brings a just and lasting peace within our reach, a peace that will serve as a strong foundation for stability, inclusivity, and progress in Mindanao. This was born of the steadfast commitment and the hard work of our administration, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and other partners and stakeholders, the U.S. included.

We thank President Obama for the United States significant assistance and support for the Philippine peace process. Our meeting today was comprehensive, historic, and significant, embodying our shared values and aspirations. It accorded President Obama and myself the opportunity to build on the relations between our countries and discuss our strategic mission for the future of the Philippines-United States relationship, a relationship that is modern, mature, and forward looking, and one that allows us to surpass challenges towards the benefit of our peoples, the entire region, and the world.

Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you, Mr. President. We now call on Secretary Jay Carney.

White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney. Mr.—sorry—President Obama has a statement.

President Obama. Mabuhay. Thank you, President Aquino, for your warm welcome and your very kind words.

With the President's indulgence, I want to begin by saying a few words about some terrible storms and tornadoes back home in the United States. Over the weekend, a series of storms claimed at least a dozen lives and damaged or destroyed homes and businesses and communities across multiple States, with the worst toll in Arkansas. So I want to offer my deepest condolences to all those who lost loved ones. I commend the heroic efforts of first responders and neighbors who rushed to help.

I want everyone affected by this tragedy to know that FEMA and the Federal Government is on the ground and will help our fellow Americans in need, working with State and local officials. And I want everybody to know that your country will be there to help you recover and rebuild as long as it takes.

Now, this is my first visit to the Philippines as President, and I'm proud to be here as we mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, when Americans and Filipinos fought together to liberate this nation during World War II. All these years later, we continue to stand shoulder to shoulder to uphold peace and security in this region and around the world.

So, Benigno, I want to thank you and the Filipino people not only for your generous hospitality today, but for a friendship that has spanned generations. And I'd add that our friendship is deeper and the United States is stronger because of the contributions and patriotism of millions of proud Filipino Americans.

As I've made clear throughout this trip, the United States is renewing our leadership in the Asia-Pacific, and our engagement is rooted in

our alliances. And that includes the Philippines, which is the oldest security treaty alliance that we have in Asia. As a vibrant democracy, the Philippines reflects the desire of citizens in this region to live in freedom and to have their universal rights upheld. As one of the fastest growing economies in Asia, the Philippines represents new opportunities for the trade and investment that creates jobs in both countries.

And given its strategic location, the Philippines is a vital partner on issues such as maritime security and freedom of navigation. And let me add that the recent agreement to end the insurgency in the south gives the Philippines the historic opportunity to forge a lasting peace here at home, with greater security and prosperity for the people of that region.

I was proud to welcome President Aquino to the White House 2 years ago, and since then, we've worked to deepen our cooperation and to modernize our alliances. Our partnership reflects an important Filipino concept—*bayanihan*—the idea that we have to work together to accomplish things that we couldn't achieve on our own. That's what we saw last year when Typhoon Yolanda devastated so many communities. Our Armed Forces and civilians from both our countries worked as one to rescue victims and to deliver lifesaving aid. That's what friends do for each other. And, Mr. President, I want to say to you and the people of the Philippines: The United States will continue to stand with you as you recover and rebuild. Our commitment to the Philippines will not waver.

Today I'm pleased that we're beginning an important new chapter in the relationship between our countries, and it starts with our security, with the new defense cooperation agreement that was signed today. I want to be very clear: The United States is not trying to reclaim old bases or build new bases. At the invitation of the Philippines, American servicemembers will rotate through Filipino facilities. We'll train and exercise more together so that we're prepared for a range of challenges, including humanitarian crises and natural disasters like Yolanda.

We'll work together to build the Philippines' defense capabilities and to work with other nations to promote regional stability, such as in the South China Sea. And I'm looking forward to visit—to my visit with forces from both our nations tomorrow to honor their service and to look ahead to the future we can shape together.

As we strengthen our bilateral security cooperation, we're also working together with regional institutions like ASEAN and the East Asia Summit. When we met in the Oval Office 2 years ago, Benigno and I agreed to promote a common set of rules, founded in respect for international law, that will help the Asia-Pacific remain open and inclusive as the region grows and develops.

Today we have reaffirmed the importance of resolving territorial disputes in the region peacefully, without intimidation or coercion. And in that spirit, I told him that the United States supports his decision to pursue international arbitration concerning territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Finally, we agreed to keep deepening our economic cooperation. I congratulated President Aquino on the reforms that he's pursued to make the Philippines more competitive. Through our Partnership for Growth and our Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, we're going to keep working together to support these efforts so that more Filipinos can share in this nation's economic progress, because growth has to be broad based and it has to be inclusive.

We discussed the steps that the Philippines could take to position itself for the Trans-Pacific Partnership. And I encouraged the President to seize the opportunity he's created by opening the next phase of economic reform and growth.

Today I'm announcing that my Commerce Secretary, Penny Pritzker, will lead a delegation of American business leaders to the Philippines this June to explore new opportunities. And I'd add that we've also committed to work together to address the devastating effects of climate change and to make Philippine communities less vulnerable to extreme storms like Yolanda.

So, Mr. President, let me once again thank you for everything you've done to strengthen our alliance and our friendship. I'm looking forward to paying tribute to the bonds between our people at the dinner tonight and to working with you as we write the next chapter in the relationship between our two countries.

Moderator. Thank you, Mr. President. We now have our Q&A. The first question will be from RG Cruz of ABS/CBN News.

China/Philippines-U.S. Security Cooperation

Q. Good afternoon, Your Excellencies. President Aquino, President Obama, welcome to the Philippines. My questions are: How did the United States reassure the Philippines that the U.S. is genuinely committed to countering an increasingly assertive China in the region? Will the U.S. defend the Philippines in case the territorial dispute with China in the West Philippine Sea or the South China Sea become an armed conflict? And how do you think will China react to the enhanced defense cooperation agreement? China has so far refused to participate in arbitration proceedings. And what are you going to do with this that is consistent with your position to have the territorial disputes resolved in arbitration? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, I've been consistent throughout my travels in Asia. We welcome China's peaceful rise. We have a constructive relationship with China. There is enormous trade, enormous business that's done between the United States and China. There are a whole range of issues on the international stage in which cooperation between the U.S. and China are vital. So our goal is not to counter China. Our goal is not to contain China.

Our goal is to make sure that international rules and norms are respected, and that includes in the area of maritime disputes. We do not have claims in this area, territorially. We're an Asia-Pacific nation and our primary interest is the peaceful resolution of conflict, the freedom of navigation, that allows for continued progress and prosperity. And we don't even take a specific position on the disputes between nations.

But as a matter of international law and international norms, we don't think that coercion and intimidation is the way to manage these disputes. And for that reason, we're very supportive of President Benigno's approach to go before the Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and to seek international arbitration that can resolve this in a diplomatic fashion.

With respect to the new defense cooperation agreement that's been signed, the goal here is wide ranging. We've had decades of alliance with the Philippines, but obviously, in the 21st century, we have to continue to update that. And the goal for this agreement is to build Philippine capacity, to engage in training, to engage in coordination, not simply to deal with issues of maritime security, but also to enhance our capabilities so that if there's a natural disaster that takes place, we're able to potentially respond more quickly; if there are additional threats that may arise, that we are able to work in a cooperative fashion.

This is consistent with, for example, the agreement that we have with Australia in Darwin. Obviously, we've had a longstanding alliance with Australia, but we also recognize that as circumstances change, as capacities change, we have to update that alliance to meet new needs and new challenges.

And so I think this is going to be a terrific opportunity for us to work with the Philippines to make sure that our navies, our air force are coordinated, to make sure that there's information sharing, to allow us to respond to new threats, and to work with other countries: ASEAN countries, Australia, Japan. My hope is, is that at some point, we're going to be able to work cooperatively with China as well, because our goal here is simply to make sure that everybody is operating in a peaceful, responsible fashion. When that happens, that allows countries to focus on what's most important to people day to day, and that is prosperity, growth, jobs. Those are the things that we as leaders should be focused on, need to be focused on. And if we have security arrangements that avoid conflict and dispute, then we're able to place our attention on where we should be focused.

Press Secretary Carney. The next question comes from Margaret Talev of Bloomberg.

International Sanctions Against Russia/Ukraine

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, later today we are expecting to hear about new sanctions on people close to President Putin. And I wanted to ask you, do you see this as a way to get to Mr. Putin's personal wealth? Do you believe that he has amassed personal wealth that's unreported? Or is it just a means of ratcheting up pressure before a move to sectoral sanctions? And you mentioned yesterday specifically the defense industry as an area where it doesn't make sense to move without Europe moving. I wanted to ask you, are we likely to see defense sanctions soon, banking and energy sanctions soon? What kind of timeframe?

And then, President Aquino, if I may, I also wanted to ask you about China and the new agreement. What I wanted to ask you is what message should China take away from the U.S. and the G–7's approach to Russia and Ukraine when it comes to territorial disputes? And do you believe that the military agreement that we've just been talking about will, in and of itself, deter China from being aggressive territorially, or should the U.S. begin developing military options that could be possible contingencies if you needed to go that course? Thanks.

President Obama. You're right, Margaret, that later today there will be an announcement made, and I can tell you that it builds on the sanctions that were already in place. As I indicated, we saw an opportunity through the Geneva talks to move in the direction of a diplomatic resolution to the situation in Ukraine.

The G–7 statement accurately points out that the Government in Kiev—the Ukrainian Government—has in fact abided by that agreement and operated in good faith. And we have not seen comparable efforts by the Russians. And as a consequence, we are going to be moving forward with an expanded list of individuals and companies that will be affected by sanctions. They remain targeted. We will also focus on some areas of high-tech defense exports to Russia that we don't think are appropriate to be exporting in this kind of climate.

The goal here is not to go after Mr. Putin, personally. The goal is to change his calculus with respect to how the current actions that he's engaging in in Ukraine could have an adverse impact on the Russian economy over the long haul and to encourage him to actually walk the walk and not just talk the talk when he—it comes to diplomatically resolving the crisis in Ukraine. There are specific steps that Russia can take. And if it takes those steps, then you can see an election taking place in Ukraine, you can see the rights of all people inside of Ukraine respected.

The Ukrainian Government has put forward credible constitutional reforms of the sort that, originally, Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the south and east said were part of their grievances, the failure to have their voices heard and represented. Kiev has responded to those.

And so there's a path here to resolve this, but Russia has not yet chosen to move forward, and these sanctions represent the next stage in a calibrated effort to change Russia's behavior. We don't yet know whether it's going to work. And that's why the next phase if in fact we saw further Russian aggression towards Ukraine could be sectoral sanctions, less narrowly targeted, addressing sectors like banking or the defense industry.

So those would be more broad based. Those aren't what we'll be announcing today. Today's will be building on what we've already done and continue to be narrowly focused, but will exact some additional costs on the Russians. But we are keeping in reserve additional steps that we could take should the situation escalate further. Okay?

President Aquino. First of all, I think China shouldn't be concerned about this agreement, especially if you look at what is being contemplated, for instance, training for emergency disaster relief operations.

I'll give you a perfect example. The Americans have the V–22 Osprey aircraft, which is quite a significant upgrade in capabilities in terms of reaching out to very remote areas. We don't have a comparable aircraft. We have smaller helicopters. And we had 44 of our Provinces devastated by Typhoon Haiyan.

Now, the training will not just train our people on how to operate this particular aircraft, but more importantly, even help the Office of Civil Defense, for instance, manage this resource in case a storm or another natural disaster of the scale that transpired does happen.

Secondly, I think the statements that America has been making with regards to Ukraine, no, is the same message that has been sent to China, and I guess not only by America, but so many other countries. China itself has said repeatedly that they will and have been conforming to international law. And the rest of the world is, I think, saying we are expecting you to confirm and, by actions, that which you have already been addressing by words, no, and not to destroy international law.

The Philippines has not just gone through arbitration, but we did remind obviously ASEAN brethren and our other dialogue partners that in 2002, they tried to come up with a code of conduct with regards to the South China Sea and the portion which the Philippines claims, which we call the West Philippine Sea. And in 2012, the 10th anniversary, there has still been no progress, even as to constituting the meeting. So the Philippines felt it was timely to raise the matter up and to remind everybody that there is no code of conduct that binds us that sets the operational parameters for all to manage any potential conflict. And as a result of that, there has been preparatory meetings towards the formal meeting to try and constitute that code of conduct.

So at the end of the day, we are not a threat militarily to any country. We don't even have—and I have said this often enough—we don't even have presently a single fighter aircraft in our inventory. Now, we have, I think, legitimate needs. We have a 36,000-kilometer coastline. We do have an exclusive economic zone. We do have concerns about poaching on our waters and preserving the environment and even protecting endangered species. So I think no country should begrudge us our rights to be able to attend to our concerns and our needs. Thank you.

Moderator. The next question will be from Christian Esguerra of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

China

Q. Good afternoon, Your Excellencies. This question goes to President Obama, but I would also like to hear the thoughts of President Aquino. I understand the tough balancing act that you need to do between China and your allies in Asia. But do you believe that China's expansionism is a threat to regional peace and stability? And will the mutual defense treaty apply in the event that the territorial conflict with China escalates into an armed conflict?

President Obama. Well, let me repeat what I said earlier. I think that it is good for the region and good for the world if China is successfully developing, if China is lifting more of its people out of poverty. There are a lot of people in China, and the more they're able to develop and provide basic needs for their people and work cooperatively with other countries in the region, that's only going to strengthen the region, that's not going to weaken it.

I do think that, as President Aquino said very persuasively, that China as a large country has already asserted that it is interested in abiding by international law. And really, our message to China consistently on a whole range of issues is we want to be a partner with you in upholding international law. In fact, larger countries have a greater responsibility in abiding by international norms and rules because when we move, it can worry smaller countries if we don't do it in a way that's consistent with international law.

And I think that there are going to be territorial disputes around the world. Look, some—we have territorial disputes with some of our closest allies. I suspect that there are some islands and rocks in and around Canada and the United States where there are probably still some arguments dating back to the 1800s. But we don't go around sending ships and threatening folks. What we do is, we sit down, and we have some people in a room; it's boring, it's not exciting—[*laughter*]—but it's usually a

good way to work out these problems and work out these issues.

And I think that all the countries that I've spoken to in the region during the course of my trip—Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and now the Philippines—their message has been the same everywhere I go, which is, they would like to resolve these issues peacefully and diplomatically. That's why I think that the approach that President Aquino has been taking, putting this before international arbitration, is a sound one.

And if China, I think, listens to its neighbors and recognizes that there is another approach to resolve these disputes, what China will find is they've got ready and willing partners throughout the Asia region—Asia-Pacific region that want to work with them on trade and commerce and selling goods and buying goods. And it's inevitable that China is going to be a dominant power in this region just by sheer size. Nobody, I think, denies that. The question is just whether other countries in the region are also able to succeed and prosper on their own terms and attend to the various interests and needs that they and their people have as well. And that's what we support.

President Aquino. Well, I think our—from the onset, our message to China has been, I think, we're all focused on achieving greater prosperity for all our respective peoples, and prosperity and continued prosperity does not happen in a vacuum. There has to be stability. And in turn, they have responded that the disputes in the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea are not the end all and be all of our relationships. And we have had good cooperation with them on so many different fronts, and perhaps one could even argue that this is the only sore point in our relationship.

Now, having said that, perhaps, we have tried to work on that particular premise of building up our ties on different aspects where there is no conflict or very little conflict and, in this particular instance, trying to find the way and means by which we can both achieve our respective goals, which in—which I believe are not—or should not be—mutually exclusive, but rather should be inclusive if at the end of the day, we do want to strive for the prosperity of our respective peoples.

That, I think, has to be the primordial concern, rather than disputes on a few rocks that are not possible to be inhabited. And I think in due time, no, given the fact that there's so much commerce that traverses this particular—both in the maritime and the air domain, no—China, which has achieved its goals of improving the life of its people, will see the soundness of this proposal and perhaps will act more, shall we say, consistently and actively towards achieving that stability for all. That is our hope.

Press Secretary Carney. Final question comes from Ed Henry of Fox News.

Southeast Asia-U.S. Relations/Syria/Ukraine/President Obama's Foreign Policy

Q. Thank you to both Presidents. President Aquino, as a journalist, I'd like to ask you why 26 journalists have been killed since you took office. And I understand that there have only been suspects arrested in six of those cases. What are you doing to fix that?

President Obama, as you grappled here with all these national security challenges, I have two questions. One, back home, we've learned that 40 military veterans died while they were waiting for health care, a very tragic situation. I know you don't run the Phoenix Office of Veterans Affairs, but as Commander in Chief, what specifically will you pledge to fix that?

And secondly, more broadly—big picture—as you end this trip, I don't think I have to remind you there have been a lot of unflattering portraits of your foreign policy right now. And rather than get into all the details of red lines, et cetera, I'd like to give you a chance to lay out what your vision is more than 5 years into office, what you think the Obama doctrine is in terms of what your guiding principle is on all of these crises and how you answer those critics who say they think the doctrine is weakness.

President Obama. Well, Ed, I would—I doubt that I'm going to have time to lay out my entire foreign policy doctrine. And there were actually some complimentary pieces as well

about my foreign policy, but I'm not sure you ran them. [*Laughter*]

Here's, I think, the general takeaway from this trip. Our alliances in the Asia-Pacific have never been stronger; I can say that unequivocally. Our relationship with ASEAN countries in Southeast Asia have never been stronger. I don't think that's subject to dispute. As recently as a decade ago, there were great tensions between us and Malaysia, for example. And I think you just witnessed the incredible warmth and strength of the relationship between those two countries.

We're here in the Philippines signing a defense agreement. Ten years ago, 15 years ago there was enormous tensions around our defense relationship with the Philippines. And so it's hard to square whatever it is that the critics are saying with facts on the ground, events on the ground, here in the Asia-Pacific region. Typically, criticism of our foreign policy has been directed at the failure to use military force. And the question I think I would have is, why is it that everybody is so eager to use military force after we've just gone through a decade of war at enormous costs to our troops and to our budget? And what is it exactly that these critics think would have been accomplished?

My job as Commander in Chief is to deploy military force as a last resort and to deploy it wisely. And frankly, most of the foreign policy commentators that have questioned our policies would go headlong into a bunch of military adventures that the American people have no interest in participating in and would not advance our core security interests.

So if you look at Syria, for example, our interest is in helping the Syrian people, but nobody suggests that us being involved in a land war in Syria would necessarily accomplish this goal. And I would note that those who criticize our foreign policy with respect to Syria, they themselves say, "No, no, no, we don't mean sending in troops." Well, what do you mean? "Well, you should be assisting the opposition." Well, we're assisting the opposition. What else do you mean? "Well, perhaps you should have taken a strike in Syria to get chemical weapons out of Syria." Well, it turns out we're getting chemical weapons out of Syria without having initiated a strike. So what else are you talking about? And at that point, it kind of trails off. [*Laughter*]

In the Ukraine, what we've done is mobilize the international community. Russia has never been more isolated. A country that used to be clearly in its orbit now is looking much more towards Europe and the West because they've seen that the arrangements that had existed for the last 20 years weren't working for them. And Russia is having to engage in activities that have been rejected uniformly around the world. And we've been able to mobilize the international community to not only put diplomatic pressure on Russia, but also we've been able to organize European countries who many were skeptical would do anything to work with us in applying sanctions to Russia. Well, what else should we be doing? "Well, we shouldn't be putting troops in," the critics will say. "That's not what we mean." Well, okay, what are you saying? "Well, we should be arming the Ukrainians more." Do people actually think that somehow us sending some additional arms into Ukraine could potentially deter the Russian Army? Or are we more likely to deter them by applying the sort of international pressure, diplomatic pressure, and economic pressure that we're applying?

The point is that for some reason, many who were proponents of what I consider to be a disastrous decision to go into Iraq haven't really learned the lesson of the last decade, and they keep on just playing the same note over and over again. Why? I don't know. But my job as Commander in Chief is to look at what is it that is going to advance our security interests over the long term, to keep our military in reserve for where we absolutely need it. There are going to be times where there are disasters and difficulties and challenges all around the world, and not all of those are going to be immediately solvable by us.

But we can continue to speak out clearly about what we believe. Where we can make a difference using all the tools we've got in the toolkit, we should do so. And if there are occasions where targeted, clear actions can be

taken that would make a difference, then we should take them. I mean, we don't do them because somebody sitting in an office in Washington or New York think it would look strong. That's not how we make foreign policy. And if you look at the results of what we've done over the last 5 years, it is fair to say that our alliances are stronger, our partnerships are stronger, and in the Asia-Pacific region, just to take one example, we are much better positioned to work with the peoples here on a whole range of issues of mutual interest.

And that may not always be sexy. That may not always attract a lot of attention, and it doesn't make for good argument on Sunday morning shows. But it avoids errors. You hit singles, you hit doubles; every once in a while, we may be able to hit a home run. But we steadily advance the interests of the American people and our partnership with folks around the world.

Q. The Veterans Affairs—[*inaudible*].

President Obama. Oh, you got me all worked up on the other one. [*Laughter*]

The moment we heard about the allegations around these 40 individuals who had died in Phoenix, I immediately ordered the Secretary of Veterans Affair, General Shinseki, to investigate. We also have an IG investigation taking place. And so we take the allegations very seriously.

That is consistent with what has been my rock-solid commitment to make sure that our veterans are cared for. I believe that if somebody has served our Nation, then they have to get the benefits and services that they have earned. And my budgets have consistently reflected that. That's why we've resourced the Veterans Affairs office more than—in terms of increases—than any other department or agency in my Government.

That doesn't mean, though, that some folks may still not be getting the help that they need. And we're going to find out if in fact that's the case, and I'm interested in working with everybody, whether it's our outstanding veteran service organizations or Congress, to make sure that there is not a single veteran in the United States who needs help, whether because they're homeless, because they're sick, because they're looking for a job. I want to make sure that they are getting the help that they need. All right?

President Aquino. With regards to the killing of journalism, perhaps we should say from the outset that I don't have the figures right here before me. But we did set up an interagency committee to look on extralegal killings and forced disappearances, torture, and other grave violations of right to life, liberty, and security of persons.

And in this particular body, there has been—I have the figures for labor-related issues, no?—there were 62 suspected cases of extrajudicial killings referred to it, and of the 62 active investigations referred to this committee, there have been 10 that have been determined to fulfill the criteria and the definitions of what constitutes an extrajudicial killing. Of the 10 cases that have been determined to be possible EJK cases, only 1 happened during our watch: the case of Mr. Estrellado.

Now, as far as journalists are concerned, perhaps the track record speaks for itself. The Maguindanao massacre involved something like 52 journalists, and there are presently something like over a hundred people who have been indicted for this crime and are undergoing trial. That doesn't mean that we have stopped trying to look for others potentially involved in this particular killing. And may we just state for the record that even when it comes to journalism, it is not a policy of this State to silence critics. All you have to do will be to turn on the TV, the radio, or look at any newspaper to find an abundance of criticisms.

Now, having said that, investigations have been done. Anybody who has been killed obviously is a victim, and investigations have been ongoing. If at times we do not reveal the discoveries by our intelligence agencies and security services, perhaps we are very sensitive to personal relationships by the people who are deceased who were killed not because of professional activities, but shall we say, other issues. No? But having said that, they were killed. That is against the law. The people will have to be found, prosecuted, and sent to jail.

The fourth plank of my promise when I ran for election was judicial reform, and this is still a work in progress, wherein we want to protect all the rights of every individual, but also ensure that the speedy portion of the promise, no, also happens. Unfortunately, speed is not a hallmark of our current judicial system, and there are various steps—laws, amendments, particular laws—even a rethink of the whole process to try and ensure the speedy disposition of justice.

Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

Moderator. That brings to a close our joint press conference. Thank you, President Obama. Thank you, President Aquino.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:40 p.m. at the Malacanang Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

Statement on Holocaust Remembrance Day
April 28, 2014

On this Yom HaShoah, I join people of all faiths in the United Sates, in the State of Israel, and around the world in remembering the 6 million Jews—innocent men, women, and children—who were senselessly murdered during the Holocaust, as well as all the victims of Nazi brutality and violence.

Even as we mourn those whose lives were taken, this day also provides us with an opportunity to honor those who emerged from the darkness of the Shoah to rebuild their lives in new communities around the world. I am honored to have the opportunity to address survivors of the Holocaust, along with many of those who have worked so hard to preserve their testimony and share their stories, when I speak at the Shoah Foundation next week. On this Yom HaShoah, let us recommit ourselves to the task of remembrance and to always oppose anti-Semitism wherever it takes root. Together, we must give enduring meaning to the words "never again."

Statement on the Canonization of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II
April 28, 2014

Today Michelle and I join Catholics around the world in celebrating the canonization of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II.

The work and witness of both Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II shaped not only the Catholic Church, but the world. Pope John XXIII articulated powerful roles for the Church in the cause of global peace and justice, and by convening the Second Vatican Council he revolutionized not only aspects of worship, but the Catholic Church's relationship with other faith communities. Pope John Paul II helped inspire the Solidarity movement in Poland, a movement that spread and eventually helped to end communism in Eastern Europe, and he spoke out forcefully against apartheid in South Africa and genocide in Rwanda. He had a special rapport with young people, drawing many of them to the Church's work and teachings.

We celebrate these saints and the leadership of His Holiness Pope Francis, and we look forward to continuing to work with Pope Francis and Catholics around the world to advance peace and justice for all people.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Benigno S. Aquino III of the Philippines in Manila, Philippines
April 28, 2014

President Aquino. Please sit down. His Excellency, the Honorable President Obama; Vice President Jejomar Binay; former President Fidel Valdez Ramos, President Joseph Ejército Estrada; Senate President Franklin Drilon, Members of the Senate present; Speaker Feliciano Belmonte, Jr., and all our Members of the House present; Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno and the Justices of the Supreme Court; Secretary Albert Del Rosario, Secretary Paquito Ochoa, members of the Cabinet; Ambassador Joey Cuisia; Ambassador Philip Goldberg, Ambassador Susan Rice, Ambassador Michael Froman; Mr. Rob Nabors; Excellencies of the diplomatic corps; distinguished members of the U.S. delegation; honored guests; ladies and gentlemen: Good evening.

Mr. President, on behalf of the Filipino people, I welcome you and your delegation to the Philippines. Though your stay here in our country may be short, I hope that it will allow you to see and experience for yourself how, indeed, it is more fun in the Philippines and that, undoubtedly, the Philippines works.

Mr. President, the historic friendship between our peoples has been punctuated by visits from your predecessors. Your visit, the eighth by a U.S. President, has been a long time coming, and it marks yet another important chapter in our relations. Your presence here today reaffirms the strong bond between our nations. As a friend and partner of the Filipino people, Mr. President, you have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the growth and development of our nation.

It is only fitting, therefore, that your efforts be recognized with the conferment of the Order of Sikatuna. Since 1953, the highest recognition of diplomatic merit of the Republic of the Philippines has been the Order of Sikatuna. It is conferred on those who have fostered and elevated the bilateral partnership of our country with other nations.

Tonight I have the distinct pleasure to confer the highest rank, that of Raja, or Grand Collar, on you, Mr. President, for your leadership and policies that assisted the Philippines in times of natural disaster, for helping uphold stability and peace by means of the rule of law in Southeast Asia, and for working with us to fundamentally raise the defense capacity of our country.

[*At this point, President Aquino's aides displayed the medal for President Obama.*]

President Obama. Thank you.

President Aquino. Congratulations!

The first of your predecessors to receive this distinction was Venerable Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1960. Then as now, may this conferment symbolize our nation's esteem for the American people and may serve as a reminder of the mutual desire to always be partners based on the highest principles of liberty, democracy, and progress.

Mr. President, our discussions today highlighted the ongoing dialogue and cooperation between our two countries as we adapt and respond to the changing circumstances and the paramount challenges of the 21st century. The world has come to realize that stability is a necessary foundation of progress and prosperity for all our peoples. Alliances are deepened not only through our shared history, but also through mutual confidence and respect, which is constantly refreshed to give new relevance and purpose to our positive, longstanding relations.

We are bound by the quest to turn our shared principles of democracy, human rights, and freedom into an inclusive reality not just for our respective peoples, but for all nations.

Mr. President, I've always taken to heart that in an increasingly complex world, it is incumbent upon all of us to be part of the solution and not of the problem. From the very first meeting we had in New York in 2010 to

this night, you and I—and the members of our respective administrations—have worked together as partners and friends, finding ways to promote common understanding and to develop meaningful solutions to a great number of our era's dilemmas.

Whether in strengthening our trade relations, security alliances, and people-to-people engagements or encouraging more nations to commit to the Open Government Partnership, an area where the Philippines continues to innovate, we continue to challenge ourselves to answer the pressing questions of these times: By what means can be—can peace be sustained? Through what instruments can poverty and the effects of climate change and calamity be addressed? And to whose benefit will our mutual and collective undertakings redound?

The answer, of course, lies in the maintenance and deepening of the alliance we share, whether in building a Southeast Asia that champions the rule of law or in advancing the belief that the most certain way to prosperity is to actively seek a harmonious relationship with all nations.

Mr. President, through this brief visit of yours, I am confident that you have witnessed firsthand how such values, our shared beliefs and principles, can transform a society as it has ours.

On this note, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, please rise as I propose a toast. To the good health, happiness, and success of our dear friend President Obama and his family, to the continuing closeness and affection between Filipinos and Americans, and to the realization of our common vision of a more stable, more prosperous, and more inclusive international community.

[*President Aquino offered a toast.*]

President Aquino. We say "*buhay*."

President Obama. Buhay. Cheers.

Well, thank you so much. *Magandang gabi.* [*Laughter*] President Aquino, distinguished guests, on behalf of my delegation and myself, I want to thank you for the magnificent welcome today and thank you for your gracious hospitality this evening.

Mr. President, I am deeply honored to receive the Order of the Sikatuna. I accept it in the spirit in which it has been bestowed, with a commitment to continuing to deepen the bonds between our two great nations.

To all the gentlemen here this evening, you look very good, but I think you'll agree that the women outshine you in the vibrant colors of the Philippines. [*Laughter*] I have only been here 1 day, but the kindness that you've shown me and the extraordinary hospitality that's been extended to us leaves us with very warm feelings and reflects, I think, the legendary spirit of the Filipino people.

I'm told that you have a word to describe this, the inner feeling, that core of a person's being: *kalooban.* [*Laughter*] We see this spirit in a family that's given itself to this country. There is no greater nobility than offering one's life to the nation and, Mr. President, your father offered his life so that this nation might be free. Your mother and the citizens of this great nation who took to the streets showed the world that true power lies with people. And with the canonization of Pope John Paul II, we also honor the role that the Catholic Church played in supporting the Filipino people and their desire for freedom.

Noynoy, you bear the scars of those who would have taken this nation backwards. And you carry on your family's noble tradition of service, in your commitment to the dignity and prosperity of the Filipino people.

We also see the spirit of this nation in all that you have overcome: colonialism and occupation, invasion and the dictatorship. Yours is a fierce independence, won through sacrifice and renewed with each generation. And we saw that again this year. After Yolanda, America grieved with you and stood with you. But we were also inspired by your resilience and your determination to care for those who had been affected.

Tonight our hearts actually grieve for some of our fellow Americans back home who have been devastated by very terrible storms and tornadoes, but we draw strength from your example. For even as we grieve, we know that we will recover and we will rebuild in these

communities that have been affected because people will care after each other.

You bring that same strength and solidarity to our alliance. So let me say tonight on behalf of the American people: We are honored and proud to call you an ally and a friend. Through our treaty alliance, the United States has an ironclad commitment to defend you, your security, and your independence.

And finally, we feel our spirit—our *kalooban*—in the friendship between our peoples that expresses itself in so many ways. There's our mutual obsession with basketball. [*Laughter*] There's our mutual admiration for Manny Pacquiao—[*laughter*]—even if sometimes, he's fighting against Americans, and it doesn't turn out the way we'd like. [*Laughter*]

There's our shared pride in the millions of Filipino Americans who contribute to our Nation every single day. There's one in particular I'm grateful for: Cris Comerford, our Executive Chef at the White House. Cris was born in Manila. She still has family here. Thanks to her, we in the White House enjoy the occasional lumpia and adobo. [*Laughter*]

So I want to propose a toast: To our gracious host, President Aquino; to the alliance that keeps us strong and free; and to the friendship between our peoples, may it always endure, across the ocean and in our hearts.

Mabuhay.

[*President Obama offered a toast.*]

President Obama. Cheers.

NOTE: President Obama spoke at 7:24 p.m. at Malacanang Palace. In his remarks, he referred to professional boxer Manny Pacquiao. President Aquino referred to Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa, Jr., Minister of Foreign Affairs Alberto Del Rosario, and Ambassador to the U.S. Jose Cuisia, Jr., of the Philippines; and U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Philip S. Goldberg.

Remarks to United States and Filipino Troops at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig, Philippines

April 29, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Please, have a seat. *Kumusta kayo.*

Audience members. *Kumusta kayo.*

The President. It is great to be here at Fort Bonifacio. Vice President Binay, distinguished guests: It's an honor to be here with our outstanding allies, the leaders and members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. And we're joined by men and women who stand tall and proud to wear the uniform of the United States of America. And let me also welcome all our Filipino friends.

Now, I'm not going to give a long speech, because it's hot and people are in uniform. I hope you don't mind me not wearing my jacket. And I also want to make sure that I have some time to shake some hands.

But I'm here in the Philippines to reaffirm the enduring alliance between our two countries. I thank President Aquino for his partnership and the deeper ties that we forged yesterday. I'm especially proud to be here as we remember one of the defining moments of our shared history, the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Leyte during World War II and the beginning of the liberation of the Philippines.

Right after this, I'll pay my respects at the American cemetery here in Manila, the final resting place of so many Americans and Filipinos who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom of this country in that war. These Americans and Filipinos rest in peace—they rest in peace as they stood in war: side by side, shoulder to shoulder—*balikatan.*

Together, Filipinos and Americans put up a heroic defense, at Bataan and Corregidor. Together, they endured the agony of death marches and the horror of the prisoner-of-war camps. Many never made it out. In those years of occupation, Filipino resistance fighters kept

up the struggle. And hundreds of thousands of Filipinos fought under the American flag.

And sadly, the proud service of many of these Filipino veterans was never fully recognized by the United States. Many were denied the compensation they had been promised. It was an injustice. So in recent years, my administration, working with Congress and others, have worked to right this wrong. We passed a law, reviewed the records, processed claims, and nearly 20,000 Filipino veterans from World War II and their families finally received the compensation they had earned. And it was the right thing to do.

What's been written about Bataan could be said of their entire generation: "The loss of life was grievous, and hardly a Filipino family was untouched by the tragedy. But the heroic struggle brought out the best in the Filipino character in the face of adversity and served as a beacon to freedom loving peoples everywhere."

We are truly honored to have some of these extraordinary veterans here with us today. Among them are men who fought at Bataan and Corregidor and a survivor of those hellish prisoner-of-war camps. Some fought in the resistance, including nurse Carolina Garcia Delfin. These veterans are now in their nineties. They are an inspiration to us all, and I'd ask those who can stand to stand or give a wave so that we can all salute their service.

The spirit of these veterans—their strength, their solidarity—I see it in you as well: when you train and exercise together to stay ready for the future; when our Special Forces—some of you here today—advise and assist our Filipino partners in their fight against terrorism; and when you respond to crises together, as you did after Yolanda. Along with your civilian partners, you rushed into the disaster zone, pulled people from the rubble, delivered food and medicine. You showed what friends can do when we take care of each other.

These are the kinds of missions we face today. Yesterday President Aquino and I agreed to begin a new chapter in our alliance. And under our new agreement, American forces can begin rotating through Filipino airfields and ports. We'll train and exercise together more to bring our militaries even closer and to support your efforts to strengthen your armed forces. We'll improve our ability to respond even faster to disasters like Yolanda. And today I thank the people of the Philippines for welcoming our servicemembers as your friends and partners.

Deepening our alliance is part of our broader vision for the Asia-Pacific. We believe that nations and peoples have the right to live in security and peace and to have their sovereignty and territorial integrity respected. We believe that international law must be upheld, that freedom of navigation must be preserved, and commerce must not be impeded. We believe that disputes must be resolved peacefully and not by intimidation or force. That's what our nations stand for. That's the future we're working for. And that's why your service is so important.

Let me be absolutely clear: For more than 60 years, the United States and the Philippines have been bound by a mutual defense treaty. And this treaty means our two nations pledge—and I'm quoting—our "common determination to defend themselves against external armed attacks so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that either of them stands alone." In other words, our commitment to defend the Philippines is ironclad, and the United States will keep that commitment, because allies never stand alone.

In closing, I want to leave you with an incredible story that captures the strength of our alliance. We all know about the massive international response after Yolanda. What few people realize is that it started all with a single aircraft carrying a handful of Filipino and American troops and civilians. The storm hit land that Friday. The very next morning, the first aircraft took off, a Philippine C–130 carrying Captain Roy Trinidad, a Philippine Navy SEAL, Colonel Mike Wylie, United States Marines, and Major George Apalisok, U.S. Air Force.

Just hours after the storm passed, with Tacloban devastated, they landed at the airport. And the next day, they were joined by others,

including Army Major Leo Liebreich. In the days that followed, they worked together—Filipinos and Americans—setting up a medical station, clearing debris from the runway, reopening that airport. Filipino soldiers unloading aid from American cargo aircraft; American troops loading supplies onto Filipino helicopters. And when all the cargo was off those aircraft, our troops worked together to help local residents aboard so that they could be evacuated to safety. And over and over, those grateful Filipinos responded with a simple word: *salamat.*

There, in the ruin, men like these worked around the clock, day after day. And at night they'd sleep on boards for cots, in a damaged building with only half a roof. "It rained on some nights, and we got a little wet," said George, "but nobody complained." "We've been training together for many years," he said. "We worked as a team." And because of individuals like these, thousands were evacuated to safety, and what started with a few men on that first day became a global relief effort that saved countless lives. Roy, the Philippine Navy SEAL, George, Mike, Leo—they are here today. George also happens to be a proud Filipino American. I want them to stand again and accept our thanks. We are proud of their outstanding service. Thank you.

There's a connection between our proud veterans from World War II, our men and women serving today, bound across the generations by the spirit of our alliance, Filipinos and Americans standing together, shoulder to shoulder, *balikatan.* On behalf of the American people, thank you all for your service. Thank you for making us so proud. To the Americans here, I am never prouder than being able to stand before you as your Commander in Chief. To our Filipino Armed Forces, thank you for being such an outstanding ally. Together, you are helping to secure the prosperity and peace of both our nations.

God bless you. God bless the Republic of the Philippines. God bless the United States of America. God bless the alliance between our great nations. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:56 a.m.

Remarks on the Minimum Wage
April 30, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Please have a seat. Good afternoon.

Audience member. Aloha!

The President. Aloha. [*Laughter*] Got a Hawaiian guy here.

After 14 months since I've called on Congress to reward the hard work of millions of Americans like the ones who we have here today to raise the Federal minimum wage, we saw this morning a majority of Senators saying yes, but almost every Republican saying no to giving America a raise.

They blocked a bill sponsored by Tom Harkin and Congressman George Miller, who is right here in front, a bill that would have gradually raised the minimum wage from $7.25 an hour to $10.10 an hour. By preventing even a vote on this bill, they prevented a raise for 28 million hard-working Americans. They said no to helping millions work their way out of poverty. And keep in mind, this bill would have done so without any new taxes or spending or bureaucracy. They told Americans like the ones who are here today that you're on your own, without even looking them in the eye.

Now, we know these Americans. We depend on them. The workers who'd benefit from a minimum wage increase often work full time, often in physically demanding jobs. They average 35 years of age. Most low-paying jobs are held by women. But because Republicans in Congress said no to even allowing a vote on the floor of the Senate, these folks are going to have to wait for the raise they deserve.

Now, the good news is, outside of Washington, folks aren't waiting. While Republicans have been deciding whether to even allow a minimum wage bill to come up for a vote, you've seen 10 States and the District of Columbia go ahead and raise theirs. Yesterday the

Hawaii Legislature voted to raise their minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. Maryland did the same thing earlier this month, and I know we've got some Maryland State legislators here today. Thanks for the good work.

So the actions that have been taken in just four States—Maryland, Connecticut, Minnesota, and Hawaii—means that over a million workers will see a raise. What's more, we've seen big companies like the Gap and small businesses—from a pizza joint in St. Louis to an ice cream parlor in Florida—increasingly choosing to raise wages for their employees because they know it's good business. They know that it means employees are more likely to stay on the job, less turnover. It means that they're going to be more productive and customers see the difference. That's one of the reasons I issued an Executive order requiring employees on new Federal contracts to be paid a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour.

So Americans have been way out in front of Congress on this issue. In fact, about three in four Americans support raising the minimum wage. And that's because we believe that in the wealthiest nation on Earth, nobody who works full time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. That's a basic principle. And at a time when those at the top are doing better than ever, while millions of Americans are working harder and harder just to get by, that three out of four Americans understands that America deserves a raise.

A few months ago, I got a letter from a woman named Sheila Artis. And Sheila lives in Lilburn, Georgia, and at the time she was working two jobs, making $8 an hour at each job. As Sheila wrote, "I do not have days off, I have hours off." But she kept going to work every day because she wanted to be able to afford college tuition for her daughter. And so she wrote to me and said: "I do not want a pot of gold. All I want is to pay for college and pay my bills in full every month." That's all she's looking for. Doesn't expect to get wealthy, just wants to be able to pay the bills at the end of every month, be able to act responsibly, meet her responsibilities based on her own hard work.

People like Sheila deserve a fair shot. So far Republicans in Congress disagree. In fact, some of them want to scrap the minimum wage entirely. One House Republican said: "It's outlived its usefulness. I'd vote to repeal the minimum wage." A Senate Republican said he doesn't think the minimum wage helps the middle class.

This is a very simple issue. Either you're in favor of raising wages for hard-working Americans or you're not. Either you want to grow the economy from the middle out and the bottom up so that prosperity is broad based, or you think that top-down economics is the way to go.

Republicans in Congress have found the time to vote more than 50 times to undermine or repeal the health care bill for millions of working families. Earlier this month, they voted for a budget that would give the wealthiest Americans a massive tax cut while forcing deep cuts to investments that help middle class families. But they won't raise wages for millions of working families when three-quarters of Americans support it? That makes no sense. And on top of that, they've blocked our efforts to make sure women receive equal pay for equal work. They've stood in the way as we've fought to extend unemployment insurance for parents who need a little help supporting their families while they're out looking for work. Republicans have failed to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, and they've increasingly failed to do anything when it comes to helping people who work hard to get ahead.

If there's any good news here, it's that Republicans in Congress don't get the last word on this or any issue; you do, the American people, the voters. Change is happening, whether Republicans in Congress like it or not. And so my message to the American people is this: Do not get discouraged by a vote like the one we saw this morning. Get fired up. Get organized. Make your voices heard. And rest assured, I'm going to keep working with you and Leader Nancy Pelosi and other Members of Congress who are here today to raise wages for hard-working Americans. It's the right thing to do.

If your Member of Congress doesn't support raising the minimum wage, you've got to let them know they're out of step and that if they keep putting politics ahead of working Americans, you'll put them out of office. Tell them to reconsider. Tell them it's time for $10.10. You can tweet at them: Use hashtag #1010Means. Let them know how raising the minimum wage would help you or your family or somebody that you know. And while you're at it, tell them to restore unemployment insurance for Americans who are trying to support their families right now while they look for work. Extending this lifeline of unemployment insurance would actually strengthen the economy and create jobs and give millions of Americans across the country a sense of hope.

In the meantime, I'm going to keep offering my support to every business owner and mayor and Governor and county official and legislator and organization that's working to give America a raise. Because change does not come from Washington, it comes to Washington from all the folks out there who were working hard. Americans want the people they send here to set aside the old political arguments and move this country forward. With enough determination and enough persistence, the American people will ultimately win out.

So thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:02 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Joseph L. Barton. He also referred to Executive Order 13658, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Hawaii Legislature's Passage of Legislation To Raise the Minimum Wage
April 30, 2014

The Hawaii Legislature did the right thing for their workers by taking action to increase their State's minimum wage to $10.10. I commend the State legislature and look forward to Governor Abercrombie signing the bill into law soon. Hawaii joins a large and growing coalition of States, cities, counties, and businesses that have given their citizens and employees the raise they deserve. This important step in Hawaii is yet another sign that the American people support raising the minimum wage, and I urge Republicans in Congress to follow Hawaii's lead and lift wages for 28 million Americans. With a Senate vote on this crucial issue planned for today, it's time for Republicans in Congress to listen to the majority of Americans who say it's time to give America a raise.

Remarks Honoring the 2014 National and State Teachers of the Year
May 1, 2014

Well, welcome to the White House. Let me start off by saying thank you to a leader of unbelievable passion and expertise and dedication, somebody who every single day wakes up and thinks about three things—either his family, basketball—[*laughter*]—or how to give every child a world-class education—our Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. [*Applause*] Hey!

I also want to thank our Members of Congress who are here today. I am thrilled to have them here and always encourage all Members of Congress to focus on education and teachers. And I am thrilled to be welcoming all our State and national teachers of the year. So give them a big round of applause. Good job.

This is a phenomenal group, in addition to being very good looking. [*Laughter*] The best of the best. And they'd be the first to say that they're only here because they're surrounded by outstanding teachers who give all to their students every single day. Today is a chance to

thank not just the teachers on this stage, but teachers all across the country. We really can't say enough about how important their role is in making sure that America succeeds. So thank you for what you're giving our children and what you're giving our Nation.

Now, it's been a while since I was in school, but I still remember all the wonderful teachers who made me who I am, who opened the world up to me, who made me feel that maybe I had something to offer and maybe saw things in me before I saw them in myself. We all had teachers like that. Talk to anybody who's succeeded in business or written a play or invented an app or broken an athletic record, and they'll tell you about a teacher or a coach who inspired them and who challenged them and taught them values and encouraged them to be curious and ask questions and explore new realms and new ideas. Everybody has got somebody like that in their lives.

That's what great teachers do. They set us on a better path. And they do it even though we ask so much of them. Teachers don't get an off day, even when they're exhausted, even when you're up all night with your own kid, even if you've got bills or something personal on your mind. Once you're in front of that class, you've got eager minds depending on you. And what a lot of people may not realize is how emotionally taxing teaching can be, because great teachers really care about their students.

You carry their struggles with you well after the school day ends. You worry about them. You're often the ones they go to with their troubles and their fears. And sometimes, you can see that they've got something on their minds even if they don't talk to you about it. Sometimes, they even reach back after they've gone off to college and may need a little advice.

And it's that all-encompassing commitment, that love that you feel for your students, that makes so many teachers go the extra mile. It's why many of you dip into your own pockets to pay for classroom supplies. It's why you spend your nights and weekends thinking about new ways to make your lessons come alive and why you work hard to build relationships with your students' families, because you want to make sure they all have the support that they need outside of the classroom, as well as in it.

So being a teacher is a 24/7 job. And yet many say there's nothing in the world they'd rather do. And that's the kind of commitment that the guests we have up on this stage today exhibit every day. We've got teachers here from just a few miles away. We've also got teachers who came from the Mariana Islands. They teach everything from biology to music to special education. What connects them is how they challenge their kids to reach their full potential; the creativity and passion that they bring to their work, instead of just going through the motions or teaching to the test. What separates them is the lasting impact that they have on their students' lives.

And that is the story of today's primary honoree, our National Teacher of the Year for 2014, Mr. Sean McComb. Give Sean a big round of applause. Now, I wish I could say this is the biggest thing that happened to Sean this year, but that little bundle right there is Sean's. [*Laughter*] So we clearly are ranked second or third in terms of big stuff happening in Sean's life.

But when Sean was a high school student, he dealt with some pretty serious problems at home and spent his days feeling apathetic and disengaged. And then he entered Mr. Schurtz's English class. And Mr. Schurtz was one of those teachers who changes everything. He made Sean want to work hard. When Sean's mom passed away, Mr. Schurtz gave Sean the strength to deliver her eulogy. When Sean went to college, it was, as he put it, through the force of Mr. Schurtz's will. So Sean himself saw the impact that a teacher could have in a child's life. And it was Mr. Schurtz's example that led Sean to become an English teacher himself.

Today, at Patapsco High School and Center for the Arts in Baltimore, Sean works with kids in a college readiness program called Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID. And it's aimed at the kind of student Sean was in high school: students who have the ability to

do the work, but need that extra push to reach their full potential. Among the last two graduating classes in the AVID program, 98 percent were admitted to a 4-year college. And they earned more merit scholarship money than the rest of the graduating class combined.

It's a tribute to Sean that one of his students asked him, "What do you think about me becoming a teacher?" Sean asked him what subject he'd want to teach, and his student said: "It doesn't matter. I just want to have as much fun as you do every day." [*Laughter*]

And Sean tries to instill in his students a sense of respect and obligation to each other. As one of his students said, "I feel like I'm not learning on my own here, I learn from everyone." And I think it speaks volumes about the kind of example Sean sets for his students that, as part of his application for this award, the parents of one of his students wrote a letter on his behalf. And they wrote: "[Our daughter] had the typical teenage drama in school that at times really got her depressed about school and life in general. We reached out to Sean for help with getting her back on track. No matter his schedule load, if he knew one of his students was in need, whether [for] a shoulder to cry on or a calming word of encouragement, he'd be there to help."

And there's an image from Sean's application essay that captures what he and all the teachers here are trying to accomplish. Every child has an invisible chalkboard attached to their hearts and minds that they carry with them through their lives. Some people they meet write messages of love and support. Some leave messages of negativity and doubt. It's a teacher's job to erase the negative messages and fill those boards with caring words and inspire confidence and strengthen values. Now, some of today's students might not even know what a chalkboard is anymore—[*laughter*]—but they do know that what a teacher gives them stays with them for a lifetime, because teachers matter.

When Michelle and I talk to students, we often tell them education is a two-way street. It's our job to provide students with great schools and great teachers, and it's their job to do their homework and work hard and do their best. The people you elect have to make sure that teachers and school districts have the resources they need to do their jobs well. And investing in education has been a top priority of mine since the day I took office. And it falls on all of us to make sure that we're encouraging our kids and reading to them and teaching them healthy, successful habits that set them on a path to college and a career and a lifetime of citizenship.

Teachers who work hard to inspire their kids every day, they too deserve our support, because these are our kids that we're grooming for all the challenges that they're going to face throughout the next generation.

So I could not be prouder of Sean and all the teachers who are here today. Sean, I'm pretty sure Mr. Schurtz would be proud of you too. And to all the teachers who are out there, and the millions who are working hard in classrooms all across our Nation, we want to thank you as well. You're doing the Lord's work. And with that, I'm going to present Sean with his apple. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, and God bless you. God bless America. That's a good-looking apple.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Silas McComb, son of 2014 National Teacher of the Year Sean M. McComb; and Tom Schurtz, English teacher, Upper Merion Area High School in King of Prussia, PA.

Statement on the Parliamentary Elections in Iraq
May 1, 2014

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the Iraqi people on the completion of yesterday's parliamentary elections. Millions of Iraqis embraced their democratic right to vote. The people of Iraq know better than anyone else the enormous challenges that they face,

and yesterday's turnout demonstrated to the world that they seek to pursue a more stable and peaceful future through the political process. Once results are finalized, a new Parliament will convene and debate the makeup of a new Government to serve the Iraqi people. Whatever the outcome of this process, it should serve to unite the country through the formation of a new Government that is supported by all Iraqi communities and that is prepared to advance tangible and implementable programs. There will be more difficult days ahead, but the United States will continue to stand with the Iraqi people as partners in their pursuit of a peaceful, unified, and prosperous future.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments for Fiscal Year 2015
May 1, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Budget amendments for the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Homeland Security, the Interior, and State, as well as the National Science Foundation and the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia. These amendments do not affect the proposed FY 2015 Budget totals.

These amendments are necessary to reflect correctly policies assumed in the FY 2015 Budget. The details of these amendments are set forth in the enclosure from the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

The President's News Conference With Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany
May 2, 2014

President Obama. Well, good morning, everybody. It is always a great pleasure to welcome my friend Chancellor Merkel to the White House. Germany is one of our strongest allies, and Angela is one of my closest partners. And with her indulgence, I want to start by making two brief comments.

First, as President, my top priority is doing everything that we can to create more jobs and opportunity for hard-working families, for our economic strength is a source of strength in the world. And this morning we learned that our businesses created 273,000 new jobs last month. All told, our businesses have now created 9.2 million new jobs over 50 consecutive months of job growth.

The grit and determination of the American people are moving us forward, but we have to keep a relentless focus on job creation and creating more opportunities for working families. There's plenty more that Congress should be doing, from raising the minimum wage to creating good construction jobs rebuilding America. And I want to work with them wherever I can, but I keep acting on my own whenever I must to make sure every American who works hard has the chance to get ahead.

Second point: I also want to say on behalf of the American people that our thoughts are with the people of Afghanistan, who have experienced an awful tragedy. We are seeing reports of a devastating landslide, on top of recent floods. Many people are reported missing; rescue efforts are underway. Just as the United States has stood with the people of Afghanistan through a difficult decade, we stand ready to help our Afghan partners as they respond to this disaster. For even as our war there comes to an end this year, our commitment to Afghanistan and its people will endure.

Now, Angela, I'm still grateful for the hospitality that you and the German people extended to me, Michelle, and our daughters last year in Berlin. It was an honor to speak at the Brandenburg Gate. You promised me a warm welcome and delivered an unbelievable 90-degree day in Berlin.

This morning our work touched on the range of issues where the United States and Germany are vital partners. We agreed to continue the close security cooperation—including law enforcement, cyber, and intelligence—that keeps our citizens safe. We reaffirmed our strong commitment to completing the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, T–TIP, which is critical to supporting jobs and boosting exports in both the United States and in Europe.

We discussed energy security, including the importance of Europe diversifying its energy sources. The United States has already approved licenses for natural gas exports, which will increase global supply and benefit partners like Europe. And T–TIP would make it even easier to get licenses to export gas to Europe.

At our working lunch, we'll review our negotiations with Iran and our shared determination to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. We'll discuss Syria, where we continue to support the moderate opposition and provide humanitarian relief to the Syrian people. I look forward to briefing Angela on my trip to Asia, a region where both our nations can help ensure that all countries in the Asia-Pacific adhere to international law and international norms.

Of course, most of our time was spent on the situation in Ukraine. Angela, I want to thank you for being such a strong partner on this issue. You've spoken out forcefully against Russia's illegal actions in Ukraine. And you've been a leader in the European Union, as well as an indispensable partner in the G–7. And your presence here today is a reminder that our nations stand united.

We are united in our determination to impose costs on Russia for its actions, including through coordinated sanctions. We're united on our unwavering article 5 commitment to the security of our NATO allies, including German aircraft joining NATO patrols over the Baltics. We're united in our support for Ukraine, including the very important IMF program approved this week to help Ukraine stabilize and reform its economy. And as Ukrainian forces move to restore order in eastern Ukraine, it is obvious to the world that these Russian-backed groups are not peaceful protesters. They are heavily armed militants who are receiving significant support from Russia. The Ukrainian Government has the right and responsibility to uphold law and order within its territory, and Russia needs to use its influence over these paramilitary groups so they disarm and stop provoking violence.

Let me say that we're also united in our outrage over the appalling treatment of the OSCE observers who have been detained in eastern Ukraine. Pro-Russian militants are still holding seven observers, including four Germans, as well as their Ukrainian escorts. They've been paraded in front of the media and forced to make statements at the barrel of a gun. It is disgraceful, and it's inexcusable. Russia needs to work to secure their immediate release, and the international community is not going to be satisfied until Colonel Schneider and his fellow captives come home.

Finally, as both Angela and I have repeatedly said, we want to see a diplomatic resolution to the situation in Ukraine. But we've also been clear that if the Russian leadership does not change course, it will face increasing costs as well as growing isolation: diplomatic and economic. Already, the ruble has fallen to near all-time lows, Russian stocks this year have dropped sharply, and Russia has slipped into recession. Investors are fleeing, and it's estimated that a hundred billion dollars in investment will exit Russia this year. Russian companies are finding it harder to access the capital they need, and Russia's credit rating has been downgraded to just above junk status. In short, Russia's actions in Ukraine are making an already weak Russian economy even weaker.

Moreover, if Russia continues on its current course, we have a range of tools at our disposal, including sanctions that would target certain

sectors of the Russian economy. And we've been consulting closely with our European and G–7 partners, and we're stepping up our planning. Angela and I continued these consultations today. The Russian leadership must know that if it continues to destabilize eastern Ukraine and disrupt this month's Presidential election, we will move quickly on additional steps, including further sanctions that will impose greater costs. But that is a choice facing the Russian leadership.

Our preference is a diplomatic resolution to this issue. And the Ukrainian Government has already shown itself more than willing to work through some of the issues that would ensure that the rights of all Ukrainians are respected, that you have a representative government. They've shown themselves willing to discuss amendments to their Constitution that devolve power to a local level. They have gone through with their commitment to potentially provide amnesty for those who lay down arms and who are willing to abandon the buildings that they've occupied. The Ukrainian Government in Kiev has followed through on the commitments that it made in Geneva. We need Russians to do the same.

So, Angela, I want to thank you again for being here and, as always, for your friendship and partnership. These are challenging times. Russia's actions in Ukraine pose a direct challenge to the goal that brought Europe and the United States together for decades, and that is a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. Just as our predecessors stood united in pursuit of that vision, so will we.

Chancellor Merkel.

Chancellor Merkel. Well, thank you very much, Barack, for this gracious hospitality and this very warm welcome that you accorded to me. And I'm very glad to be able to be back in Washington to have an opportunity to address all of these different issues with you.

I think priority really is on the current issue of Ukraine, and that loomed very large on our agenda. It showed how important the transatlantic partnership is also in today's times. And I think it's a very good thing that all of those steps that we've taken so far, we've taken together. And today, in our talk, we yet again underlined that we fully intend to go ahead as we did in the past. What happened on Ukraine, what happened on the Crimean Peninsula? Well, the postwar order has been put into question that rests on the acceptance of territorial integrity by all, and this is why it was so important for us to react in concord.

And what is at stake here is that people in Ukraine can act on the basis of self-determination and can determine themselves which road they wish to embark on into the future. The 25th of May is a very crucial date in order to ensure that, and we will see to it that elections can take place. The OSCE will play a central role in all of this. We talked about this. And together with the OSCE, we shall do everything we can in order to bring Russia, that is, after all, a member of the OSCE, to do the necessary steps so as the 25th of May, bringing about some progress in stabilizing Ukraine.

The 25th of May is not all that far away. Should that not be possible to stabilize the situation, further sanctions will be unavoidable. This is something that we don't want. We have made a diplomatic offer—an offer for a diplomatic solution. So it's very much up to the Russians which road we will embark on, but we are firmly resolved to continue to travel down that road.

Now, secondly, we addressed issues that have bearing on the work of the intelligence services here. Let me underline yet again for the German side: We have always enjoyed a very close cooperation with our American partner on this front. And anyone in political responsibility is more than aware, looking at the challenges of the modern world today, that obviously in fighting terrorism, the work of the intelligence services is not only important, it is indeed indispensable.

I am firmly convinced that our cooperation in this area is a very helpful one, yet there are differences of opinion on what sort of balance to strike between the intensity of surveillance, of trying to protect the citizens against threats, and on the other hand, protecting individual privacy and individual freedom and rights of personality. And that will require further

discussion between our two countries in order to overcome these differences of opinion.

We have these discussions incidentally also on the European front. We are talking about safe harbor agreement, for example, about a privacy protection agreement. And I take back the message home that the U.S. is ready to do that, is ready to discuss this, although we may have differences of opinion on certain issues.

Thirdly, T–TIP, I think particularly in the overall context of further intensifying our trade relations, of global growth, but also in the context of diversification of our energy supply, this is a very important issue. It will be very important for us to bring the negotiations very quickly to a close on T–TIP. We are firmly convinced that for the European Union, for Germany, and for the United States, this offers a lot of opportunities for the future. And it's so important for us to bring this agreement to a successful conclusion. There are a number of discussions, I know, a number of skeptical remarks. People have doubts. But these doubts, this skepticism, can be overcome, and it needs to be overcome. Just look at the many partners all over the world that have bilateral trade agreements. I mean, it's simply necessary. Looking at the intensity of a transatlantic partnership and the closeness of our partnership, for us to have this agreement—this transatlantic trade agreement—and we are fully at one on this one.

So we had very intensive talks, and we were going to build on this over lunch. Thank you very much, Barack, for giving me this opportunity, and also thank you for your gracious hospitality.

President Obama. I think we're going to take two questions from the U.S. press and two questions from the German press. We'll start with Lesley Clark [McClatchy Newspapers].

Ukraine/International Sanctions Against Russia/Energy Procurement in Europe

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. With violence today in Ukraine, you've said today that Germany and the United States are united in efforts to deescalate. But have you been able to reach any common ground with the Chancellor on sectoral sanctions, particularly the energy—the Russian energy section—sector? What's next if you're unable to?

And to Chancellor Merkel, reports in the U.S. press have suggested that you've said that you believed President Putin may not be in touch with reality. Is that what you've said? Is that what you believe? And could you give us—you talked to him earlier this week—could you give us a little more insight into what he might be thinking? And do you believe that he is a threat to Europe? Thank you.

President Obama. Obviously, every day, we're watching the events in eastern Ukraine and southern Ukraine with deep concern. And I think that what you've seen over the course of the last several months in the midst of this crisis is remarkable unity between the United States and the European Union in the response.

We have at the same time offered a diplomatic approach that could resolve this issue. We have been unified in supporting the Ukrainian Government in Kiev, both economically, diplomatically, and politically. And we have said that we would apply costs and consequences to the Russians if they continued with their actions. And that's exactly what we've done. And you saw just over the course of the last week additional sanctions applied both by the Europeans and the U.S.

The next step is going to be a broader based, sectoral sanctions regime. And what we have said is, is that we want to continue to keep open the possibility of resolving the issue diplomatically. But as Angela Merkel said, if in fact we see the disruptions and the destabilization continuing so severely that it impedes elections on May 25, we will not have a choice but to move forward with additional, more severe sanctions. And the consultations have been taking place over the course of the last several weeks about what exactly those would look like and would apply to a range of sectors. The goal is not to punish Russia; the goal is to give them an incentive to choose the better course, and that is to resolve these issues diplomatically. And I think we are united on that front.

Within Europe, within the EU, I'm sure there has to be extensive consultations. You've got 28 countries, and some are more vulnerable than others to potential Russian retaliation, and we have to take those into account. Not every country is going to be in exactly the same place. But what has been remarkable is the degree to which all countries agree that Russia has violated international law, violated territorial integrity and sovereignty of a country in Europe. And I think there's unanimity that there have to be consequences for that.

How we structure these sectoral sanctions, the experts have been working on, and we anticipate that if we have to use them, we can. Our preference would be not to have to use them. And I thank Chancellor Merkel's leadership on this front. She has been extraordinarily helpful not only in facilitating European unity, but she's also been very important in helping to shape a possible diplomatic resolution and reaching out to the Russians to encourage them to take that door while it's still open.

Q. Do you feel confident you have German support on sectoral sanctions, particularly the energy sector?

President Obama. You've got to keep in mind that when it comes to sectoral sanctions, we're looking at a whole range of issues. Energy flows from Russia to Europe, those continued even in the midst of the cold war, at the height of the cold war. So the idea that you're going to turn off the tap on all Russian oil or natural gas exports, I think, is unrealistic. But there are a range of approaches that can be taken not only in the energy sector, but in the arms sector, the finance sector, in terms of lines of credit for trade, all that have a significant impact on Russia.

I don't think it's appropriate for us to delve into the details at this stage because our hope is that we don't have to deploy them. But what I can say is, is that our experts at the highest level—and not just bilaterally, but multilaterally through the European Commission and our diplomatic teams—have been working through all the possibilities, and we're confident that we will have a package that will further impact Russia's growth and economy. But again, our hope is, is that we shouldn't have to use them. We're not interested in punishing the Russian people. We do think that Mr. Putin and his leadership circle are taking bad decisions and unnecessary decisions and he needs to be dissuaded from his current course.

Chancellor Merkel. It is, I think, obvious to all that there are very different assessments on what happens in Ukraine. On the one hand, you have the United States and Europe—we've always taken our decisions together—and on the other hand, the Russian appreciation and appraisal of the situation. I hope that Russia will live up better in the future to its responsibilities. But we need to see deeds matching up their words.

We don't have any release of the hostages of the OSCE, among them also four German hostages. This is a very crucial step that needs to happen first. We don't—we have not yet seen any implementation of the Geneva agreement by the Russian side. The Ukrainian side has taken some steps in the right direction. And the OSCE, too, is an organization to which we wish to accord a greater role so that they can prepare and pave the way for elections.

And one word on sanctions: I agree with the American President; they are not an end in itself, but combined with the offer that we want diplomatic solutions, it is a very necessary second component to show that we're serious about our principles. And there is a broad base, a broad range of possibilities that are being prepared for in the European Union. In Europe, we have taken a decision that should further destabilization happen, we will move to a third stage of sanctions.

I would like to underline: This is not necessarily what we want, but we are ready and prepared to go to such a step. My main aim would be, first and foremost, to improve stabilization and to see to it that the elections can happen there. We will work on this in the next few days, but we are also prepared to take further steps.

What we are talking about here will be sectoral measures in the context of certain branches of industry. The American President—and I can only agree to this—has said

what is necessary as regards the dependency on gas, which is very strong in Europe, but we can also look ahead, in the medium term, what we can do in order to promote an energy union in the European Union, which we're doing. Looking at our dependencies in the next 10 to 15 years on Russian gas supplies, there are six countries that—right now in the EU—that depend a hundred percent on gas supplies. We need to improve the reverse flow, as we call it. We need to improve our grid of pipelines. All of the countries need to share supplies. And those are measures that we're currently discussing in Europe.

We're talking about short-term, but also medium-term and long-term measures. And then, the free trade agreement, T–TIP, is also gaining more prominence in this respect.

Ukraine/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. Madam Chancellor, you said that time is of the essence and that it's getting shorter, leading up to the 25th. When would be the time when you would say a third phase—moving to a third phase of sanctions is what you would promote? And is a more energy-intensive initiative by the EU necessary, for example, on heads of state and government level?

And to President, can you understand the fact that also Mr. Putin needs to play a role in the solution, which is the position of the European Union, that also his arguments have to be weighed? And after the Chancellor having made those several phone calls with Mr. Putin, do you think that the Chancellor also stands a chance to, sort of, work on this?

Chancellor Merkel. Well, as to the question, what about the next few days to come, I think the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the EU on the 12th of May is going to play a very important role. In this respect, one can sound out the possibilities there are in various directions. We, from the German side, as we have agreed with our American friends, will do everything we can in order bring the OSCE into a situation, supported politically, that is, to do what is necessary in order to bring matters forward in Ukraine.

On the one hand, you have OSCE monitors for the elections, but also questions as regards a change of the Constitution; reform of—towards further devolution or decentralization. All of the different parts of the country obviously have to be at the same level as regards information on this, and the OSCE wants to do that. We want to give them the necessary political backing.

When a certain point in time is there, it's very difficult to predict. I can only say that, for me, the elections on the 25th of May are crucial. And should there be further attempts at destabilization, this will be getting more and more difficult. But for now, I am working for elections to take place on that very date, and the heads of state and government are ready at any time should they be proved necessary to meet.

We've proved that over the past in other areas, for example, the euro crisis. And we will demonstrate this resolve yet again. I am firmly convinced that the United States of America and the European Union need to act in concert here, and they have done so in the past, and they are going to continue to do so.

President Obama. I've said from the start that Russia has legitimate interests in terms of what happens next door in Ukraine. Obviously, there is a deep and complicated history between Russia and Ukraine, and so of course, Mr. Putin's views should be taken into account. What can't be taken into account is Mr. Putin's suggestion, both through words and actions, that he has the right to violate the sovereignty of another country, to violate its territorial integrity, to dictate the economic policies or foreign policy of a sovereign country. That's not acceptable.

Our view from the start has been that the Ukrainians should be able to make their own decisions. And I'm very confident that if the Ukrainians are allowed to make their own decisions, then they will choose to have a good relationship with Russia as well as a good relationship with Europe; that they'll want to trade with Russia and they'll want to trade with Europe. But what they cannot accept, understandably, is the notion that they are simply an

appendage—an extension—of Russia, and that the Kremlin has veto power over decisions made by a duly elected Government in Kiev.

So if in fact Mr. Putin's goal is to allow Ukrainians to make their own decisions, then he is free to offer up his opinions about what he would like the relationship to be between Ukraine and Russia. And I suspect that there will be a whole lot of Ukrainian leaders who will take those views into consideration. But it can't be done at the barrel of a gun. It can't be done by sending masked gunmen to occupy buildings or to intimidate journalists.

And one of the biggest concerns that we've seen is the Russian propaganda that has been blasted out nonstop suggesting somehow that the Ukrainian Government is responsible for the problems in eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian Government has shown remarkable restraint throughout this process. The notion that this is some spontaneous uprising in eastern Ukraine is belied by all the evidence of well-organized, trained, armed militias with the capacity to shoot down helicopters. Generally, local protesters don't possess that capacity of surface-to-air missiles or whatever weapons were used to shoot down helicopters, tragically.

We've seen the attempts of OSCE monitors—who were approved not just by Europe or the United States, but also by Russia—being detained. And somehow, Russia is suggesting that Kiev is responsible for that? We've heard Mr. Putin say, well, Kiev has to do a better job of reaching out to Eastern Europe—or eastern Ukraine. You've seen attempts by Kiev in a very serious way to propose decentralization of power and to provide for local elections and for them to offer amnesty to those who have already taken over these buildings. None of that has been acknowledged by Mr. Putin or the various Russian mouthpieces that are out there.

You've also seen suggestions or implications that somehow Americans are responsible for meddling inside Ukraine. I have to say that our only interest is for Ukraine to be able to make its own decisions. And the last thing we want is disorder and chaos in the center of Europe.

So for the German audience who perhaps is tuning into Russian TV, I would just advise to stay focused on the facts and what's happened on the ground. A few weeks ago, Mr. Putin was still denying that the Russian military was even involved in Crimea. Then, a few weeks later, he acknowledged, yes, I guess that was our guys. And so there just has not been the kind of honesty and credibility about the situation there and a willingness to engage seriously in resolving these diplomatic issues.

And our hope is, is that, in fact, Mr. Putin recognizes there's a way for him to have good relations with Ukraine, good relations with Europe, good relations with the United States. But it cannot be done through the kinds of intimidation and coercion that we're seeing take place right now in Eastern Europe [Ukraine].*

Tangi [Tangi Quemener, Agence France-Presse].

Oklahoma's Execution of Clayton D. Lockett/Capital Punishment/Germany-U.S. Relations/National Security Agency's Electronic Surveillance Program

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Earlier this week, an inmate died in Oklahoma in what critics have called an inhumane manner because of a seemingly botched execution. Human right groups put the United States in the dubious company of China, Iran, and Saudi Arabia when it comes to the prevalence of executions. Some European countries have expressed their concerns as well. What are your thoughts on this? And does this raise moral questions about U.S. justice and global reputation?

And to Chancellor Merkel, after Edward Snowden's revelations on U.S. surveillance of your own cell phone, you said that friends shouldn't spy on friends. Are you satisfied that the steps taken by the U.S. on NSA surveillance are now consistent with a healthy alliance? Has the personal trust been rebuilt? And

* White House correction.

I was wondering if you could elaborate a little bit on this no-spy agreement that apparently couldn't be reached. Thank you.

President Obama. What happened in Oklahoma is deeply troubling. The individual who was subject to the death penalty had committed heinous crimes, terrible crimes. And I've said in the past that there are certain circumstances in which a crime is so terrible that the application of the death penalty may be appropriate: mass killings, the killings of children. But I've also said that in the application of the death penalty in this country, we have seen significant problems: racial bias, an uneven application of the death penalty, situations in which there were individuals on death row who later on were discovered to have been innocent because of exculpatory evidence. And all these, I think, do raise significant questions about how the death penalty is being applied. And this situation in Oklahoma, I think, just highlights some of the significant problems there.

So I'll be discussing with Eric Holder and others to get me an analysis of what steps have been taking not just in this particular instance, but more broadly in this area. I think we do have to, as a society, ask ourselves some difficult and profound questions around these issues.

If you don't mind, I'm going to also go ahead and maybe say something about NSA, just because I know it's of great interest in the German press as well. Germany is one of our closest allies and our closest friends, and that's true across the spectrum of issues: security, intelligence, economic, diplomatic. And Angela Merkel is one of my closest friends on the world stage and somebody whose partnership I deeply value. And so it has pained me to see the degree to which the Snowden disclosures have created strains in the relationship.

But more broadly, I've also been convinced for a very long time that it is important for our legal structures and our policy structures to catch up with rapidly advancing technologies. And as a consequence, through a series of steps, what we've tried to do is reform what we do and have taken these issues very seriously. Domestically, we tried to provide additional assurances to the American people that their privacy is protected. But what I've also done is taken the unprecedented step of ordering our intelligence communities to take the privacy interests of non-U.S. persons into account in everything that they do, something that's not been done before and most other countries in the world do not do. What I've said is, is that the privacy interests of non-U.S. citizens are deeply relevant and have to be taken into account and we have to have policies and procedures to protect them, not just U.S. persons. And we are in the process of implementing a whole series of those steps.

We have shared with the Germans the things that we are doing. I will repeat what I've said before, that ordinary Germans are not subject to continual surveillance, are not subject to a whole range of bulk data gathering. I know that the perceptions, I think, among the public sometimes are that the United States has capacities similar to what you see on movies and in television. The truth of the matter is, is that our focus is principally and primarily on how do we make sure that terrorists, those who want to proliferate weapons, transnational criminals are not able to engage in the activities that they're engaging in. And in that, we can only be successful if we're partnering with friends like Germany. We won't succeed if we're doing that on our own.

So what I've pledged to Chancellor Merkel has been, in addition to the reforms that we've already taken, in addition to saying that we are going to apply privacy standards to how we deal with non-U.S. persons as well as U.S. persons, in addition to the work that we're doing to constrain the potential use of bulk data, we are committed to a U.S.-German cyber dialogue to close further the gaps that may exist in terms of how we operate, how you—German intelligence operates, to make sure that there is transparency and clarity about what we're doing and what our goals and our intentions are.

These are complicated issues, and we're not perfectly aligned yet, but we share the same values, and we share the same concerns. And this is something that is deeply important to

me, and I'm absolutely committed that by the time I leave this office, we're going to have a stronger legal footing and international framework for how we are doing business in the intelligence sphere.

I will say, though, that I don't think that there is an inevitable contradiction between our security and safety and our privacy. And the one thing that I've tried to share with Chancellor Merkel is that the United States, historically, has been concerned about privacy. It's embedded in our Constitution, and as the world's oldest continuous constitutional democracy, I think we know a little bit about trying to protect people's privacy.

And we have a technology that is moving rapidly, and we have a very challenging world that we have to deal with, and we've got to adjust our legal frameworks. But she should not doubt, and the German people should not doubt, how seriously we take these issues. And I believe that we're going to be able to get them resolved to the satisfaction not just of our two countries, but of people around the world.

Chancellor Merkel. Under the present conditions, we have, after all, possibilities as regards our differences of opinion to overcome those differences in the medium term and in the long term. One possibility is to enter into such a cyber dialogue, which is very important because that gives us a forum to have somewhat longer discussions as to where we stand individually, what the technical possibilities, but also ramifications, of our technological advances are.

Secondly, there are two strands of negotiations with the European Union: on the one hand, the safe harbor agreement, and then the data protection—privacy protection accord. And in the course of the negotiations, it will come out very clearly what differences of opinion there are, what different perspectives there are. And I think it's of prime importance for us to bring these negotiations forward, the process, but also bring it to a successful conclusion.

And something else comes into play. I heard this this morning when I had a breakfast meeting with people who are very closely in contact with the Parliaments. They suggested to me that our Parliaments too ought to have closer contacts on this. And that's very important not only for the governments to talk about these things, but also for the broader public. And these could be three possibilities as to how to address this further and also understand each other's motivations and arguments better. Mr.—[*inaudible*]—please.

[*At this point, the reporter asked a question in English as follows.*]

National Security Agency's Electronic Surveillance Program/Germany-U.S. Security Cooperation

Q. Mr. President, could you explain us from your point of view why it's not possible to agree on a no-spy agreement, which was, as we understood, proposed by the U.S. Government last summer? What kind of assurances could you give Chancellor Merkel with regard not only to ordinary German citizens, but to government members—some of them sitting here—that they are not under U.S. surveillance anymore?

[*The reporter asked an additional question in German, which was translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

And, Chancellor, the question addressed to you: When the French President was here a few weeks ago, after his talk with President Obama, he said that trust as regards to the NSA discussion has been rebuilt. Couldn't you say the same thing?

President Obama. It's not quite accurate to say that the U.S. Government offered a no-spy agreement and then withdrew it. I think that what is accurate to say is, is that we do not have a blanket no-spy agreement with any country, with any of our closest partners. What we do have are a series of partnerships and procedures and processes that are built up between the various intelligence agencies.

And what we are doing with the Germans—as we're doing with the French, as we do with the British or the Canadians or anybody—is to

work through what exactly the rules are governing the relationship between each country and make sure that there are no misunderstandings. And I think that we have gone a long way in closing some of the gaps, but as Chancellor Merkel said, there are still some gaps that need to be worked through.

But I think what we can be confident about is that the basic approach that we take with Germany is similar to the approach that we take with all our allies and all our friends and that during the course of the last several years as technology advanced, I think there was a danger in which traditional expectations tipped over because of new technologies. And what we've tried to do is make sure that our policies now reflect increased capabilities and, as a consequence, increased dangers of intrusions in privacy.

But let me put it this way: Our interest in working effectively with the Germans and to making sure that German governments as well as the German people feel confident about what we do is as important to us as any other country. Germany is at the top of our list in terms of friends and allies and colleagues, and so we're not holding back from doing something with Germany that we somehow do with somebody else.

Chancellor Merkel. I think the whole debate, Mr.—[*inaudible*]—has shown that the situation is such that we have a few difficulties yet to overcome. So this is why there's going to be this cyber dialogue between our two countries, and this is also why there needs to be and will have to be more than just business as usual. I mean, looking at the discussion not only in the German Parliament, but also among members of the German Government and also in the German public, we need to do that.

But it's very good that we have taken these first steps, and what's still dividing us—issues, for example, of proportionality, and the like—will be addressed. We will work on this, and it's going to be on the agenda for the next few weeks to come.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:07 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Col. Axel Schneider, who led the team of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) monitors detained in Kramatorsk, Ukraine, on April 25; and former National Security Agency contractor Edward J. Snowden, who is accused of leaking classified documents to members of the news media. A reporter referred to President François Hollande of France. Chancellor Merkel and some reporters spoke in German, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's Weekly Address
May 3, 2014

Hi, everybody. My number-one priority as President is doing whatever I can to create more jobs and opportunity for hard-working families. And yesterday we learned that businesses added 273,000 jobs last month. All told, our businesses have now created 9.2 million new jobs over 50 consecutive months of job growth.

But we need to keep going, to create more good jobs and give middle class families a sense of security. And I want to work with Congress to do it.

But so far this year, Republicans in Congress have blocked or voted down every serious idea to create jobs and strengthen the middle class. They've said no to raising the minimum wage, no to equal pay for equal work, and no to restoring the unemployment insurance they let expire for more than 2 million Americans looking for a new job.

That's not what we need right now. Not when there are still too many folks out of work and too many families working harder than ever just to get by.

That's why, in my State of the Union Address, I said that in this year of action, whenever I can act on my own to create jobs and expand opportunity for more Americans, I will. And since January, I've taken more than 20 executive actions to do just that.

I acted to raise more workers' wages by requiring that workers on new Federal contracts earn a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour, and as long as Republicans in Congress refuse to act, I'll keep working with cities, States, and businesses to give more Americans a raise. I acted to encourage more pay transparency and strengthen enforcement of equal pay laws so that more women have the tools they need to earn fair pay. And I'm modernizing regulations to make sure that more Americans who work overtime get the pay that they've earned. I've launched new hubs to help attract more high-tech manufacturing jobs to America and ordered a reform of job training programs to make sure more Americans can earn the skills that employers need right now. I've brought together business leaders to help us connect more classrooms to high-speed Internet and give more of the long-term unemployed a better shot at finding a job.

Each of these steps will make a difference. You can check out the full list at whitehouse.gov. But we could do a lot more if Republicans in Congress were less interested in stacking the deck in favor of those at the top and more interested in growing the economy for everybody. They've now voted more than 50 times to take apart the Affordable Care Act. Imagine if they voted 50 times on serious jobs bills.

That's why I'm going to take action on my own wherever I can: to grow our economy from the middle out, not the top down; to give every American who works hard a chance to get ahead. That's what this year of action is all about, and that's what I'm going to keep fighting for.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:30 p.m. on May 2 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on May 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 2, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 3.

Statement on the Death of Former Representative James L. Oberstar
May 3, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to hear about the passing of Congressman Jim Oberstar. Jim cared deeply about the people of Minnesota, devoting his 36 years of service to improving America's infrastructure, creating opportunity for hard-working Minnesotans, and building a strong economy for future generations of Americans. Jim will be deeply missed, and Michelle and I send our condolences to his wife Jean, his children, and grandchildren.

Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner
May 3, 2014

The President. Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Before I get started, can we get the new Presidential setup out here?

[*At this point, aides placed two fern plants beside the podium.*]

It's worked before. [*Laughter*] That's more like it.

It is great to be back. What a year, huh? I usually start these dinners with a few self-deprecating jokes. After my stellar 2013, what could I possibly talk about? [*Laughter*]

I admit it, last year was rough. Sheesh. [*Laughter*] At one point, things got so bad, the 47 percent called Mitt Romney to apologize. [*Laughter*]

Of course, we rolled out healthcare.gov. That could have gone better. [*Laughter*] In 2008, my slogan was, "Yes, we can." In 2013, my slogan was, "Control-Alt-Delete." [*Laughter*] On the plus side, they did turn the launch of healthcare.gov into one of the year's biggest movies. [*Laughter*]

[*An image of the title of the Walt Disney Co. film "Frozen" was shown.*]

But rather than dwell on the past, I would like to pivot to this dinner. Let's welcome our headliner this evening, Joel McHale. On "Community," Joel plays a preening, self-obsessed narcissist. So this diner must be a real change of pace for you. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the White House Correspondents' Association for hosting us here tonight. I am happy to be here, even though I am a little jetlagged from my trip to Malaysia. The lengths we have to go to get CNN coverage these days. [*Laughter*] I think they're still searching for their table. [*Laughter*]

MSNBC is here. They're a little overwhelmed. [*Laughter*] They've never seen an audience this big before. [*Laughter*]

But look, everybody is trying to keep up with this incredibly fast-changing media landscape. For example, I got a lot of grief on cable news for promoting Obamacare to young people on "Between Two Ferns." But that's what young people like to watch. And to be fair, I am not the first person on television between two potted plants. [*Laughter*]

[*An image of Elizabeth Hasselbeck, cohost of the Fox News program "Fox & Friends," seated between cohosts Steve Doocy and Brian Kilmeade was shown.*]

Sometimes, I do feel disrespected by you reporters. But that's okay. Seattle Seahawk cornerback Richard Sherman is here tonight. And he gave me some great tips on how to handle it. Jake Tapper, don't you ever talk about me like that! [*Laughter*] I'm the best President in the game! [*Laughter*]

What do you think, Richard? Was that good? A little more feeling next time? While we're talking sports, just last month, a wonderful story, an American won the Boston Marathon for first time in 30 years. Which was inspiring and only fair, since a Kenyan has been President for the last 6. [*Laughter*] We had to even things out. [*Laughter*]

We have some other athletes here tonight, including Olympic snowboarding gold medalist Jamie Anderson is here. We're proud of her. Incredibly talented young lady. Michelle and I watched the Olympics. We cannot believe what these folks do, death-defying feats. Haven't seen somebody pull a 180 that fast since Rand Paul disinvited that Nevada rancher from this dinner. [*Laughter*] As a general rule, things don't end well if the sentence starts, "Let me tell you something I know about the Negro." [*Laughter*] You don't really need to hear the rest of it. [*Laughter*] Just a tip for you: Don't start your sentence that way. [*Laughter*]

Speaking of Rand Paul—[*laughter*]—Colorado legalized marijuana this year, an interesting social experiment. I do hope it doesn't lead to a whole lot of paranoid people who think that the Federal Government is out to get them and listening to their phone calls. [*Laughter*] That would be a problem. [*Laughter*]

And speaking of conservative heroes, the Koch brothers bought a table here tonight. But as usual, they used a shadowy right-wing organization as a front. Hello, Fox News. [*Laughter*] I'm just kidding. Let's face it, Fox, you'll miss me when I'm gone. [*Laughter*] It will be harder to convince the American people that Hillary was born in Kenya. [*Laughter*]

A lot of us really are concerned about the way big money is influencing our politics. I remember when a Super PAC was just me buying Marlboro 100s instead of regulars. [*Laughter*]

Of course, now that it's 2014, Washington is obsessed on the midterms. Folks are saying that with my sagging poll numbers, my fellow Democrats don't really want me campaigning with them. And I don't think that's true, although I did notice the other day that Sasha needed a speaker at career day, and she invited Bill Clinton. [*Laughter*] I was a little hurt by that. [*Laughter*]

Both sides are doing whatever it takes to win the ruthless game. Republicans—this is a true story—Republicans actually brought in a group of consultants to teach their candidates how to speak to women. This is true. And I don't know if it will work with women, but I understand that America's teenage boys are signing up to run for the Senate in droves. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, while you guys focus on the horserace, I'm going to do what I do: I'm going to be focused on everyday Americans. Just yesterday I read a heartbreaking letter—you know I get letters from folks from around the country; every day, I get 10 that I read—this one got to me: a Virginia man who's been stuck in the same part-time job for years, no respect from his boss, no chance to get ahead. I really wish Eric Cantor would stop writing me. [*Laughter*] You can just pick up the phone, Eric. [*Laughter*]

And I'm feeling sorry, believe it or not, for the Speaker of the House as well. These days, the House Republicans actually give John Boehner a harder time than they give me, which means orange really is the new black. [*Laughter*]

But I have not given up the idea of working with Congress. In fact, 2 weeks ago, Senator Ted Cruz and I, we got a bill done together. And I have to say, the signing ceremony was something special. We've got a picture of it, I think. [*Laughter*]

[*An image of the President signing a bill, with Sen. R. Edward "Ted" Cruz and Satan standing behind him and an icy landscape labeled "Hell" in the background, was shown.*]

Look, I know, Washington seems more dysfunctional than ever. Gridlock has gotten so bad in this town you have to wonder: What did we do to piss off Chris Christie so bad? [*Laughter*]

One issue, for example, we haven't been able to agree on is unemployment insurance. Republicans continue to refuse to extend it. You know what? I am beginning to think they've got a point. If you want to get paid while not working, you should have to run for Congress just like everybody else. [*Laughter*]

Of course, there is one thing that keeps Republicans busy. They have tried more than 50 times to repeal Obamacare. Despite that, 8 million people signed up for health care in the first open enrollment. Which does lead one to ask, how well does Obamacare have to work before you don't want to repeal it? What if everybody's cholesterol drops to 120? [*Laughter*] What if your yearly checkup came with tickets to a Clippers game? [*Laughter*] Not the old, Don Sterling Clippers, the new, Oprah Clippers. Would that be good enough? [*Laughter*] What if it gave Mitch McConnell a pulse? [*Laughter*] What is it going to take? [*Laughter*]

Anyway, this year, I've promised to use more executive actions to get things done without Congress. My critics call this the imperial Presidency. The truth is, I just show up every day in my office and do my job. I've got a picture of this, I think. [*Laughter*]

[*An image of the President sitting in the Oval Office on a throne from the HBO program "Game of Thrones," with a crossbow on the coffee table in the foreground, was shown.*]

You would think they'd appreciate a more assertive approach, considering that the new conservative darling is none other than Vladimir Putin. [*Laughter*] Last year, Pat Buchanan said Putin is "headed straight for the Nobel Peace Prize." He said this. Now, I know it sounds crazy, but to be fair, they give those to just about anybody these days. [*Laughter*] So it could happen.

But it's not just Pat. Rudy Giuliani said Putin is "what you call a leader." Mike Huckabee and Sean Hannity keep talking about his bare chest, which is kind of weird. [*Laughter*]

[*An image depicting Fox News commentator Sean Hannity, former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City, and former Gov. Michael D. Huckabee of Arkansas as teenage fans, with a poster of a shirtless President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia on the wall behind them, was shown.*]

Look it up. They talk about it a lot. [*Laughter*]

It is strange to think that I have just 2½ years left in this office. Everywhere I look, there are reminders that I only hold this job temporarily. [*Laughter*]

[*An image of moving boxes labeled "Hillary—Oval" and "Hold for Hillary" stacked on top of the President's desk in the Oval Office was shown.*]

But it's a long time between now and 2016, and anything can happen. You may have heard the other day, Hillary had to dodge a flying shoe at a press conference. [*Laughter*]

[*An image of Vice President Joe Biden holding a shoe was shown.*]

I love that picture. [*Laughter*]

Regardless of what happens, I've run my last campaign, and I'm beginning to think about my legacy. Some of you know Mayor Rahm Emanuel recently announced he is naming a high school in Chicago after me, which is extremely humbling. I was even more flattered to hear Rick Perry, who is here tonight, is doing the same thing in Texas. Take a look. [*Laughter*]

[*An image of a high school was shown. A sign in the foreground read: "Raging Socialist Preparatory School. Home of the 'Fighting Chomskys.' Bake Sale Tuesday. All Proceeds Will Be Divided Equally."*]

Thank you, Rick. It means a lot to me. [*Laughter*]

And I intend to enjoy all the free time that I will have. George W. Bush took up painting after he left office, which inspired me to take up my own artistic side. [*Laughter*] I'm sure we've got a shot of this. [*Laughter*] Maybe not. The joke doesn't work without the slide. [*Laughter*] Oh, well. Assume that it was funny. [*Laughter*] Does this happen to you, Joel? It does, okay.

On a more serious note, tonight reminds us that we really are lucky to live in a country where reporters get to give a head of state a hard time on a daily basis, and then, once a year, give him or her the chance, at least, to try to return the favor.

But we also know that not every journalist or photographer or crewmember is so fortunate, because even as we celebrate the free press tonight, our thoughts are with those in places around the globe, like Ukraine and Afghanistan and Syria and Egypt, who risk everything—in some cases, even give their lives—to report the news.

And what tonight also reminds us is that the fight for full and fair access goes beyond the chance to ask a question. As Steve mentioned, decades ago, an African American who wanted to cover his or her President might be barred from journalism school, burdened by Jim Crow, and, once in Washington, banned from press conferences. But after years of effort, Black editors and publishers began meeting with FDR's Press Secretary, Steve Early. And then they met with the President himself, who declared that a Black reporter would get a credential. And even when Harry McAlpin made history as the first African American to attend a Presidential news conference, he wasn't always welcomed by the other reporters. But he was welcomed by the President, who told him, "I'm glad to see you, McAlpin, and I'm very happy to have you here."

Now, that sentiment might have worn off once Harry asked him a question or two—[*laughter*]—and Harry's battles continued. But he made history. And we're so proud of Sherman and his family for being here tonight and the White House Correspondents' Association for creating a scholarship in Harry's name.

For over 100 years, even as the White House Correspondents' Association has told the story of America's progress, you've lived it too, gradually allowing equal access to women and minorities and gays and Americans with disabilities and, yes, radio and television and Internet reporters as well. And through it all, you've helped make sure that even as societies change, our fundamental commitment to the interaction between those who govern and those who ask questions doesn't change. And as Jay will attest, it's a legacy you carry on enthusiastically every single day.

And because this is the 100th anniversary of the Correspondents' Association, I actually

recorded an additional brief video thanking all of you for your hard work. Can we run the video?

[*A video of the President speaking began, but then malfunctioned.*]

The President. What's going on? [*Laughter*] I was told this would work. Does anybody know how to fix this? [*Laughter*]

[*Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius entered the stage.*]

The President. Oh, thank you. [*Laughter*] You got it?

Secretary Sebelius. I've got this. I see it all the time. There, that should work.

[*The video played. In it, the President made brief remarks as follows.*]

The President. Congratulations to the White House Correspondents' Association. Here's to a hundred more terrific years.

[*The President resumed his live remarks as follows.*]

The President. Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you, and God bless America. And thank you, Kathleen Sebelius.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 p.m. at the Washington Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to 2012 Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; Jake Tapper, chief Washington correspondent and anchor, CNN's "The Lead With Jake Tapper" program; Mebrahtom Keflezighi, winner of the 2014 Boston Marathon; Cliven Bundy, a Nevada rancher who led an armed confrontation with Federal rangers over a grazing rights dispute in April; Charles G. Koch, chief executive officer and chairman of the board, and David H. Koch, executive vice president, Koch Industries, Inc.; former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; Donald Sterling, owner, National Basketball Association's Los Angeles Clippers; Oprah Winfrey, chairman and chief executive officer, HARPO Entertainment Group; political commentator and author Patrick J. Buchanan; Gov. J. Richard Perry of Texas; Steve Thomma, president, White House Correspondents' Association; Sherman McAlpin, son of the late White House correspondent and civil rights activist Harry S. McAlpin; and White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti
May 5, 2014

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome President Guelleh and his delegation here today.

I had an opportunity to visit Djibouti when I was a Senator, before I was elected President, and saw firsthand the importance of U.S. cooperation with Djibouti. Obviously, Camp Lemonnier is extraordinarily important not only to our work throughout the Horn of Africa, but throughout the region. And we very much appreciate the hospitality that the Djiboutians provide, but we also are very appreciative of the opportunity to meet with the President here today and to deepen this relationship further.

Maybe I should get a quick translation.

[*At this point, President Obama motioned for the interpreter to begin the translation. President Guelleh interjected in French as follows.*]

President Guelleh. J'ai compris, j'ai compris.

[*President Obama then continued his remarks.*]

President Obama. Okay. Today we'll be discussing a wide range of issues. In addition to our security cooperation, we're deeply interested in working with the President around development and issues of being able to expand education and health care work that we're already doing with the Government of Djibouti. We're

extremely interested in regional issues, and we want to say how much we appreciate the work that Djibouti has done through AMISOM in Somalia, an area where there have been continuing, growing threats not only to the Somali people, but al-Shabaab obviously has carried out operations throughout East Africa. And there's a significant presence of soldiers from Djibouti who are participating in the multinational force that has been able to push back al-Shabaab's control over large portions of Somalia.

Today, in addition to announcing the long-term lease that we are signing with Djibouti, we also hope that we can discuss the Africa Leaders Summit that I'll be hosting this year. We appreciate the President's participation, and we're going to be looking at his advice on a range of issues that we can work on together. And we're going to continue to engage with the Government of Djibouti around issues related to human rights in the region. Human trafficking continues to be a concern. There is an action plan that the Government of Djibouti has put in place, and we want to find ways in which we can assist in implementing.

So overall, this is a critical facility that we maintain in Djibouti. We could not do it without the President's cooperation. We're grateful for him agreeing for a long-term presence there. We look forward to deepening cooperation that benefits the people of Djibouti as well as the people of the United States of America.

So, welcome. Thank you.

President Guelleh. Mr. President, thank you very much. I'm very happy to be in Washington, DC, today, and I thank you for the warm welcome that you have extended to me and my delegation.

I'd very much like to reinforce—continue to reinforce relations between Djibouti and the United States. And I would like to thank President Obama once more for having shown such a willingness to receive us here as the President of Djibouti. I also want to say like to say that our relation is a relation of strategic partnership. And I not only thank the President for that, but also for everything the President is doing, his cooperation in terms of development, our political develop—our development policy in Djibouti is very much helped by the President in terms of, as he said himself, health care, education, and especially, in our case, food security. And I think that what's important here is that the President has a vision. He has a vision for the development of Africa in general and for our region in particular. And I thank you for that vision, Mr. President.

The fact that we welcomed the U.S. forces in our country show our support for international peace and for peace in our region as well. As you know, Djibouti is not only taking part in AMISOM, but we are also present in Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire, Western Sahara, and soon enough, in the Central African Republic. We do that all for peace in the world and in particular for peace in Africa. So I am very happy to be here today to continue to reinforce our partnership and our relationship.

The President. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). President Guelleh spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President Obama and President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti
May 5, 2014

Today at the White House, President Obama and Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh pledged to work closely together to advance their shared vision for a secure, stable, and prosperous Horn of Africa and to strengthen and deepen the strategic partnership between our two countries.

Economic, Trade, and Energy Cooperation

President Obama and President Guelleh discussed their shared vision for addressing human capital and economic development challenges in Djibouti. President Obama noted his strong support for the Djiboutian govern-

ment's efforts to achieve its ambitious reform goals and to respond to the needs of Djiboutian citizens. President Guelleh highlighted the positive impact of U.S. investments in Djiboutian communities, particularly in the areas of health and education, and President Obama commended President Guelleh for his commitment to lowering unemployment, reducing poverty, and improving reliable access to energy, potable water, and health care.

To help grow Djibouti's economy and assist Djibouti in achieving these goals, the United States pledged to increase technical and financial assistance to the Djiboutian people and to invest in Djibouti's development priorities. President Obama pledged to expand U.S.-sponsored workforce education and training to help strengthen Djibouti's workforce and set a foundation for expanded employment and private sector investment.

President Obama also reaffirmed his strong commitment to expanding reliable access to electricity in Africa. Given Djibouti's electricity needs and to enhance its role as a regional commercial hub, the United States plans to provide technical assistance to support Djibouti's energy sector. The leaders identified areas for future cooperation on energy, including through the East African Geothermal Partnership. The United States plans to help build the Government of Djibouti's technical and institutional capacity to leverage greater private sector investment across the energy sector, including working together to catalyze private financing to develop renewable energy in Djibouti.

Regional Integration, Youth Empowerment, and Development

President Obama congratulated President Guelleh on Djibouti's committed participation and leadership in regional bodies, including as host to and co-founder of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). President Obama noted his strong support for President Guelleh's leadership in the Horn of Africa and welcomed his plans for infrastructure development and economic integration across an increasingly vital region. The two leaders shared their assessments of the pivotal role economic development and democratic governance can play in Djibouti's future, including in advancing economic and development goals.

President Obama recognized President Guelleh for his commitment to empowering women and girls and promoting increased access to education and health services. President Obama congratulated President Guelleh on the Djiboutian youth who have been selected to represent Djibouti as participants in the *Young African Leaders Initiative*. The leaders emphasized the importance of supporting young entrepreneurs, encouraging youth to engage in public service and invest in the next generation of African leaders.

The Presidents also discussed ways that the U.S. presence at Camp Lemonnier can help further expand economic opportunity for the Djiboutian people, including through the Administration's work with the U.S. Congress on proposed "Djibouti First" legislation that would that would give preference to Djiboutian products and services in Department of Defense procurements in support of U.S. requirements in Djibouti. In doing so, the United States seeks to promote stability and economic development beneficial to both countries and to demonstrate our long term commitment to Djibouti's long term economic growth.

Defense, Security and Regional Counterterrorism Cooperation

The two leaders discussed their shared commitment to increase security and stability in the Horn of Africa and to prevent al-Qa'ida and al-Shabaab from gaining new footholds. President Obama and President Guelleh discussed ongoing civilian and military cooperation in the areas of countering terrorism and violent extremism, countering piracy, enhancing maritime security, and securing Djibouti's borders. They recognized the important role that U.S.-Djibouti cooperation plays in achieving these goals, and reaffirmed that our shared security priorities remain a central component of our relationship.

The Presidents noted Camp Lemonnier's critical role as an operational headquarters for regional security and the importance the base plays in protecting Americans and Djiboutians alike from violent extremist individuals and organizations. President Obama thanked President Guelleh for helping ensure the safety and security of U.S. personnel in Djibouti.

President Obama announced the United States' intention to provide enhanced security assistance and equipment to Djiboutian security forces to advance these shared regional security and counterterrorism goals, including by providing materiel and assistance to Djiboutian forces deploying to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The leaders also plan to expand liaison relationships as a critical way to deepen our partnership.

Shared Efforts in Somalia

The Presidents noted that transnational challenges in the Horn of Africa cannot be met by any one country alone. President Obama commended Djibouti's important contributions to peace and security in Somalia, including through its participation in AMISOM operations aimed at defeating al-Shabaab and by organizing a number of reconciliation conferences in support of peacemaking efforts. Djibouti has also strongly and consistently supported multinational efforts to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia.

President Guelleh noted that Djibouti's efforts as part of AMISOM have helped provide Somalis with their best chance to achieve security, stability and peace in more than two decades. The two leaders discussed Djibouti's experience as a troop-contributing country to AMISOM. The Presidents highlighted the need to support renewed efforts by AMISOM and the Somali National Army to defeat al-Shabaab and to help bring security and stability to Somalia. This commitment has not been without burden and cost. President Obama praised the brave service of Djiboutian soldiers in Somalia and recognized the sacrifices members of the Djiboutian Armed Forces and their families have made to help bring peace to Somalia.

A Long-Term Strategic Partnership

President Obama and President Guelleh concluded their meeting by reaffirming their shared commitment to the special and longstanding relationship between the United States and the Republic of Djibouti. The leaders pledged to continue to work to strengthen our strategic partnership and contribute to a more secure world. To carry this important dialogue forward, they intend to establish a U.S.-Djibouti Binational Forum and to designate senior officials to lead the implementation of the commitments made today in the spirit of building a vibrant 21st Century Strategic Partnership grounded in friendship, mutual trust, and common security.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Celebration
May 5, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! *Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca!* [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Hey!

The President. Hey! This is a rowdy crowd, I can tell. [*Laughter*] They're ready to party.

Audience member. Love the margaritas.

The President. The margaritas, I hear, are quite good. Be careful, though, they'll sneak up on you. [*Laughter*]

Well, thank you for joining our Cinco de Mayo celebration. It is wonderful to have so many Latinos and Latinas—and people who wish they were Latino or Latina. [*Laughter*] A lot of honorary Latinos and Latinas: On Cinco de Mayo, *todos somos Latinos!* [*Laughter*]

I'm just going to say a few words, and then we get back to the fiesta. No Cinco de Mayo would be complete without great food and

great music. So I want to thank our guest chefs: my good friend José Andrés; Pati Jinich is here as well. Our musicians: members of the Georgetown University Orchestra and our mariachis, Los Gallos Negros.

I'm honored to welcome our friends from other parts of the Americas. We've got Mexico's Under Secretary of North America, Sergio Alcocer, is here. The Ambassador to the United States, Eduardo Medina Mora, is here as well. Give them a big round of applause. Peru's Ambassador to the U.S. Harold Forsyth is here. I also want to welcome all the Members of Congress who are here today, including members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. And its outstanding Chairman, Rubén Hinojosa, is here. And as always, it's great to see Hispanic Americans from across my administration, whose contributions every single day make me proud.

Cinco de Mayo marks a great moment in Mexican history, one that ended up shaping the United States as well. One hundred and fifty-two years ago, a band of Mexican patriots in the town of Puebla faced an invasion by Napoleon III's troops. The French side was bigger, it was better trained and better armed. But the Mexicans grabbed whatever weapons they could and fought with all their might, and they won the battle. A few years later, thanks to the bravery and tenacity of the Mexican people, with support of the United States, the occupation came to an end.

And had the opposite happened, our nations would look very different today. Our friendship with Mexico has had an enormous influence on our history and our culture and our economy. Today, our governments work together on everything from stopping crime to promoting trade to protecting our environment. And millions of Americans are connected to Mexico through ties of friendship and language and family, and they make vital contributions to our Nation every single day. So today we remember with gratitude those brave fighters who triumphed in Puebla all those years ago and the generations of Mexicans and Americans who've sustained and strengthened us ever since.

Of course, we can honor our past by building an even brighter future together. And that means restoring our Nation's promise of opportunity for all so that everybody has a fair shot at the American Dream, which is why I fought so hard for the Affordable Care Act, because every American deserves quality, affordable health care. Thanks to the ACA, millions of Latinos now have access to expanded preventive care, and hundreds of thousands of Latinos have recently enrolled in health care plans; hundreds of thousands of young Latinos are able to stay on their parents' plans until they're 26.

It's the same reason I'm fighting to make sure every child has access to a world-class education, from pre-K through college. And thanks in part to our investments, our high school graduation rate is the highest on record, and the Latino dropout rate has been cut in half since 2000. That's worth applauding.

Education helps us find new frontiers for collaboration between the United States and Mexico and throughout the hemisphere. Now, that's why I launched the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative to significantly increase educational exchanges among our countries. And I just came from a discussion with leaders in business and education who see these exchanges as key to maintaining our competitive advantage. They understand that if we're serious about building a 21st-century workforce, then we're going to have to build knowledge and relationships that reach across borders. And that's how we're going to create new jobs and develop new markets, explore new ideas and unleash the hemisphere's extraordinary opportunity.

And opportunity for all is why I'm fighting so hard to fix a broken immigration system. [*Applause*] All right? I am convinced that America's prosperity and security depend on comprehensive, commonsense immigration reform. Last year, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate came together to pass a commonsense bill that would grow our economy and shrink our deficit, reward businesses and workers that played by the rules, all while upholding

our most cherished values as a nation of immigrants.

So far, the Republicans in the House have refused to allow meaningful immigration reform to move forward at all. We know there are Republicans in the House who want to do the right thing. I'm going to work with everybody who's serious about strengthening our borders, modernizing our legal immigration system, keeping more families together, and getting this done. And it's the right thing to do for our economy, for our security, and our future.

The majority of Americans agree with me on this. It's time for Members of Congress and Republicans in the House to catch up with the rest of the country. So I need all of you to go out there and mobilize, particularly over the next 2 months. Tell them to get on board. Get on board with business leaders and faith leaders, law enforcement, Republicans and Democrats across the country. Say yes to fixing our broken immigration system. Let's get it done right now once and for all.

So today, on Cinco de Mayo, we celebrate our shared heritage, our shared history, our shared future. And that's not something to be afraid of, that's something that we need to embrace. That's what I'm going to be doing, not just today, but every day, to keep fighting for opportunity for all people and greater understanding between all nations. And I know that's what you're fighting for as well.

So *gracias. Que Dios los bendiga, y feliz Cinco de Mayo.* Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:46 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to José Ramón Andrés Puerta, chef/owner, ThinkFoodGroup; and Patricia Jinich, chef/host, PBS's "Pati's Mexican Table" program.

Statement on the Death of Billy Frank, Jr.
May 5, 2014

I was saddened to learn of the passing of Billy Frank, Jr., Chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and a member of the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Billy fought for treaty rights to fish the waters of the Pacific Northwest, a battle he finally won in 1974 after being arrested many times during tribal "fish-ins." Today, thanks to his courage and determined effort, our resources are better protected and more tribes are able to enjoy the rights preserved for them more than a century ago. Billy never stopped fighting to make sure future generations would be able to enjoy the outdoors as he did, and his passion on the issue of climate change should serve as an inspiration to us all. I extend my deepest sympathies to the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and to Billy's family, and to his many friends who so greatly admired him.

Statement on Israeli Independence Day
May 6, 2014

I send my warmest wishes to the Israeli people as they celebrate their independence. Generations of Jews dreamed of the day when the Jewish people would have their own state in their historic homeland, and 66 years ago today, that dream came true. Today, Israel thrives as a diverse and vibrant democracy and as a "startup nation" that celebrates entrepreneurship and innovation.

The United States was the first nation to recognize the Government of Israel in 1948, and today, we are still the first to come to Israel's defense. The enduring relationship between our two nations, based on shared democratic values and our unwavering commitment to Israel's security, has never been stronger. We will continue to work with Israel to support a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict,

one that ensures that the Israelis will live alongside their neighbors in peace and with security.

On behalf of the American people, I wish President Peres, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the Israeli people a joyous *Yom Ha'atzmaut.*

Remarks Following a Tour of Tornado Damage in Vilonia, Arkansas
May 7, 2014

Well, good afternoon, everybody. Obviously, we just had a chance to tour some of the areas that were devastated by last week's tornadoes and had a chance to meet with some of the families who lost loved ones. I also had a chance to thank some of the first responders and the recovery workers and members of the National Guard who have been working nonstop to help families and businesses pick up the pieces after this devastating tornado.

I want to express my deep appreciation for Governor Beebe and his outstanding leadership; Senator Pryor, Congressman Griffin, Mayor Firestone. They all showed great leadership and were here, hands-on, on the ground throughout these difficult days. And I'm here to make sure that they know and that everybody who's been affected knows that the Federal Government is going to be right here until we get these communities rebuilt. Because when something like this happens to a wonderful community like this one, it happens to all of us, and we've got to be there for them.

After the tornadoes touched down, I immediately approved a major disaster declaration to make sure every Federal resource was available to help folks in Faulkner County and other areas affected by the tornadoes. At my direction, FEMA deployed Incident Management Assistance Teams to support local recovery efforts. Craig Fugate was down here the day after the storm, and a team of the Army Corps of Engineers has been helping search through the debris.

Here in Vilonia, the recovery process is just beginning. It's especially difficult because this town has seen more than its fair share of tragedy. Almost exactly 3 years ago, another tornado leveled parts of Vilonia, and some families and businesses had just finished rebuilding when they were forced to start all over. But folks here are tough. They look out for one another, and that's been especially clear over the past week.

Immediately after the tornado hit, about 200 people, including fire crews from other counties, were ready to go house to house searching for injured neighbors. Some survivors were driven to the hospital by complete strangers, and in the days that followed, thousands of volunteers showed up to help remove debris and hunt for belongings, pick up trash, and deliver supplies and water. And one volunteer, 16-year-old Casey Williams, did such a good job coordinating relief efforts that Arkansas State troopers started taking orders from her. I had a chance to meet her, and she is extraordinarily impressive. So I don't know what she's going to be doing in the future, but I know it's going to be something great.

More than any disaster, it is that dedication and that commitment to each other that truly defines this town. As one resident said, "We just say a prayer and then get to work." So the people of Vilonia and all the other towns devastated by the storm understand there's a lot of work that remains to be done. But I'm here to remind them that they're not doing this work alone. Your country is going to be here for you. We're going to support you every step of the way. You are in our thoughts and prayers, Mr. Mayor. Thank you for the great leadership that you've shown. I know that you can count on your Governor and your Senator and your Congressman here to make sure that every resource that we have available to you is going to be there.

And one of the things that the mayor expressed to me that we've got some concerns about is when this happens in a town like this, it's not just the infrastructure and the buildings that are torn down. You also lose part of your sales tax base. And so we're going to have to figure out how they can make sure that they get

back on their feet. And I'll be sure to work with Congressman Griffin, Senator Pryor, and Governor Beebe to see if we can do something on that front as well. But I could not be more impressed by the spirit of community that's here.

We've got this gentleman right here I just had a chance to meet, who was in one of these homes where he lives just when the storm hit. Thankfully, he and his 16-year-old son and wife are okay. It's a reminder, obviously, that as important as possessions are, nothing is more important than family. Those families that I had a chance to met—meet with, they're still mourning those they lost. But they couldn't be more grateful and thankful for the way the community has responded. So this is a testament to the strength of this community, the strength of Arkansas, and the strength of America. And I could not be more proud of everybody who has participated in the recovery process. All right?

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor James Firestone of Vilonia, AR.

Statement on the Retirement of Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Christine H. Fox
May 7, 2014

As Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Christine H. Fox concludes her tenure at the Department of Defense, I want to acknowledge her dedicated service to our Nation and to the men and women of our Armed Forces. Last year, she graciously agreed to return to the Department of Defense shortly after she had officially retired in order to ensure that Secretary Hagel and I had the support we needed in a challenging time. She provided steady leadership in the wake of sequester and developed an approach to the budget that puts our military on a path toward restored readiness. I am grateful to Christine for her willingness to step in and serve her Nation once again—as the highest ranking woman ever to serve at the Department of Defense—and wish her the very best in her future endeavors.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Syria
May 7, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency, unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the actions of the Government of Syria declared in Executive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004—as modified in scope and relied upon for additional steps taken in Executive Order 13399 of April 25, 2006, Executive Order 13460 of February 13, 2008, Executive Order 13572 of April 29, 2011, Executive Order 13573 of May 18, 2011, Executive Order 13582 of August 17, 2011, Executive Order 13606 of April 22, 2012, and Executive Order 13608 of May 1, 2012—is to continue in effect beyond May 11, 2014.

The regime's brutal war on the Syrian people, who have been calling for freedom and a representative government, endangers not only the Syrian people themselves, but could yield greater instability throughout the region. The Syrian regime's actions and policies, in-

cluding supporting terrorist organizations and impeding the Lebanese government's ability to function effectively, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect the national emergency declared with respect to this threat and to maintain in force the sanctions to address this national emergency.

In addition, the United States condemns the Asad regime's use of brutal violence and human rights abuses and calls on the Asad regime to stop its violent war and allow a political transition in Syria that will forge a credible path to a future of greater freedom, democracy, opportunity, and justice.

The United States will consider changes in the composition, policies, and actions of the Government of Syria in determining whether to continue or terminate this national emergency in the future.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
May 7, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Protocol Amending the United States-Spain Taxation Convention
May 7, 2014

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to its ratification, the Protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and its Protocol, signed at Madrid on February 22, 1990, and a related Memorandum of Understanding signed on January 14, 2013, at Madrid, together with correcting notes dated July 23, 2013, and January 31, 2014 (together the "proposed protocol"). I also transmit for the information of the Senate the report of the Department of State, which includes an overview of the proposed protocol.

The proposed protocol was negotiated to bring United States-Spain tax treaty relations into closer conformity with U.S. tax treaty policy. The proposed protocol exempts from source-country withholding cross-border payments of certain direct dividends, interest, royalties, and capital gains, and updates the provisions of the existing convention with respect to preventing abuse by third-country investors and the exchanges of information between revenue authorities. The proposed protocol also updates the mutual agreement procedure by requiring binding arbitration of certain cases that the competent authorities of the United States and Spain have been unable to resolve after a reasonable period of time.

I recommend the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the proposed protocol and give its advice and consent to its ratification.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
May 7, 2014.

Message to the Congress on Withdrawing the Designation of Russia as a Beneficiary Under the Generalized System of Preferences Program
May 7, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 502(f)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974 (the "1974 Act") (19 U.S.C. 2462(f)(2)), I am providing notice of my intent to withdraw the designation of Russia as a beneficiary developing country under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program.

Sections 501(1) and (4) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2461(1) and (4)), provide that, in affording duty-free treatment under the GSP, the President shall have due regard for, among other factors, the effect such action will have on furthering the economic development of a beneficiary developing country through the expansion of its exports and the extent of the beneficiary developing country's competitiveness with respect to eligible articles.

Section 502(c) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2462(c)) provides that, in determining whether to designate any country as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP, the President shall take into account various factors, including the country's level of economic development, the country's per capita gross national product, the living standards of its inhabitants, and any other economic factors he deems appropriate.

Having considered the factors set forth in sections 501 and 502(c) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that it is appropriate to withdraw Russia's designation as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP program because Russia is sufficiently advanced in economic development and improved in trade competitiveness that continued preferential treatment under the GSP is not warranted. I intend to issue a proclamation withdrawing Russia's designation consistent with section 502(f)(2) of the 1974 Act.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
May 7, 2014.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in Los Angeles, California
May 7, 2014

Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, let me start by thanking Cindy and Alan for the incredible hospitality. We are so grateful to you—and arranging this nice weather. It's a little cool for L.A. I know we've got some folks in blankets here—[*laughter*]—but for a Chicagoan, it feels pretty good. It's pretty balmy. [*Laughter*]

Let me also acknowledge two outstanding leaders who are doing great work every single day. From the Senate, the head of the Democratic Senate Committee, Michael Bennet, the great Senator from Colorado. We appreciate him. And California's own, former Speaker and soon to be Speaker again, Nancy Pelosi is in the house. Nancy Pelosi! We love Nancy.

I'm going to make my remarks at the top real brief because I want to spend most of the time in a conversation, and it's a small enough group that I can spend some time on questions. I'm in trouble at home. And the reason is, is because I told Michelle back in 2012, I had run my last campaign, but a couple months ago, I had to let her in on a secret, and that is, honey, I've got one more campaign I've got to run. [*Laughter*] I need to make sure we continue to have a Democratic Senate, and I need a Democratic House of Representatives in Washington. And I'm going to do everything I can to make that happen.

Now, let me describe to you why this is so important, just in case you guys did not get the

memo. [*Laughter*] Over the last 5½ years, as Cindy said, we've made enormous progress on a whole range of issues. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month; we've now created 9.2 million jobs. The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been since 2007. The financial sector has obviously recovered. People have recovered the values of their pensions and 401(k)s that they had lost, so trillions of dollars of wealth restored. The housing market has rebounded.

On the energy front, we have increased our production of wind energy threefold, solar energy by tenfold. We've actually reduced our carbon emissions faster than any other country in the world, even as we are also producing more energy generally, doubling our production of clean energy. Increased fuel efficiency standards on cars; saved an auto industry that was on the verge of collapse; provided health insurance to millions of Americans all across the country, including right here in California, and made the protections of those of us who already had insurance that much more sturdy.

We've expanded access for young people to go to college. Millions of young people are able to go to college that weren't going before. We actually have the highest college enrollment rates in our history. We've reduced the dropout rate for Latino students; we've cut it in half since 2000.

And yet, despite all that, despite ending two wars, despite the progress that we've made on issues that are important to everybody here, there's still disquiet around the country. There's an anxiety and sense of frustration. And the reason is, is because people understand that for all that we've done, the challenges out there remain daunting, and we have a Washington that's not working.

And for families, in particular, even with the recovery, they still have not seen an increase in wages, an increase in incomes. They're still worried that they're not going to be able to retire when they plan to retire. They worry about the prospects for their kids, whether they're going to be able to live out their American Dream the same way that they did.

And we can debate a lot about whether the Senate rules need to be changed and are there problems with our media and campaign finance and there are a whole bunch of structural reasons why Washington isn't working as well as it should. But the principal reason is that there is just a fundamental difference in what we as Democrats believe and what this particular brand of Republicans that we've got in Congress believes.

We believe in pay equity; they say no. We believe in a higher minimum wage; they say no. We believe in making sure that we're investing in our infrastructure and putting people back to work and investing in innovation and basic research that can unlock cures for things like Alzheimer's; their budget takes us in the opposite direction. We believe in early childhood education to make sure that opportunity for all actually means something, that it's not just a slogan; they say no. We think climate change is real; some of them say it's a hoax, that we're fabricating it.

And the biggest challenge we have is not just that there's a fundamental difference in vision and where we want to take the country, not just the fact that they continue to subscribe to a top-down approach to economic growth and opportunity and we believe that the economy works better when it works for everybody and that real growth happens from the bottom up and the middle out——

[*At this point, a car alarm went off.*]

Sound the alarm, because there's a problem. [*Laughter*] Let's see if we can cut that. Whose car is that? You recognize that one? [*Laughter*] There you go. [*Laughter*]

But here's what's more disconcerting. Their willingness to say no to everything—the fact that since 2007, they have filibustered about 500 pieces of legislation that would help the middle class just gives you a sense of how opposed they are to any progress—has actually led to an increase in cynicism and discouragement among the people who were counting on us to fight for them. The conclusion is, well, nothing works. And the problem is, is that for the folks worth fighting for—for the person

who's cleaning up that house or hotel, for the guy who used to work on construction, but now has been laid off—they need us. Not because they want a handout, but because they know that government can serve an important function in unleashing the power of our private sector.

And when they get discouraged, they don't vote. And the congenital problem that Democrats have is in midterms especially, we don't vote. Our voters are younger, they're more likely to be minority. And because they're more likely to be struggling, they're not always paying attention when the President—Presidential candidate isn't on the ballot. And so you've got a self-fulfilling prophesy: People who have the most at stake in a government that works opt out of the system, those who don't believe that government can do anything are empowered, gridlock reigns, and we get this downward spiral of even more cynicism and more dysfunction.

And we have to break out of that cycle. And that's what this election is about. Because I am optimistic about America's prospects. I've been traveling a lot over the last couple months, and I go all around the world—I go to Europe, I go to Asia, and everywhere I go—do not buy this notion perpetrated here that somehow America is on a downward trajectory. By every indicator, we are better positioned than any country on Earth to succeed in this knowledge economy in the 21st century. But what is absolutely true is if we don't make good choices, we could decline.

And we're not going to make good choices unless we break out of this cycle in which dysfunction breeds cynicism and cynicism then breeds more dysfunction. We've got to break out of it. And that happens during midterms. That does not happen during Presidential elections.

A lot of people here are already excited about 2016. You guys were excited about 2008. You got geared up for 2012. I am grateful. But I need some partners. I've got to have a Democratic Senate. And when you think about everything I was able to accomplish with Nancy Pelosi at the helm in the House, all the issues that you care about that we were able to advance when she was the leader, I think you've got a big stake in making sure that we've got a Democratic House as well.

So my main message to all of you is: Feel a sense of urgency about this election. This is my last campaign, and I'm going to put everything I've got into it, but I need you to feel that this is just as important, because we can't afford to wait until 2016. And nothing is going to happen magically, by the way, that changes in 2016 if we still have the same kind of voting patterns and the same dysfunction that we've got right now in Congress. We'll be stymied all over again.

The good news is we've got public opinion on our side if people actually turn out. On every issue—on minimum wage, on pay equity, on clean energy, on immigration reform—there's not an issue in which we do not possess a majority in this country. But it has to manifest itself during election time and especially during midterms.

So I hope you guys get fired up, because I'm fired up. [*Laughter*] And I continue to be ready to go. Thank you, everybody. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:52 p.m. at the residence of Alan F. and Cindy Horn. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the USC Shoah Foundation in Los Angeles
May 7, 2014

Thank you so much. Please, please, everybody have a seat.

Well, thank you, Steven, for your incredibly generous words, for this great honor, for your friendship, and most importantly, for the extraordinary work which brings us here all tonight. To Robert Katz and all the members of the board and staff of the Shoah Foundation; to President Max Nikias and everybody at USC; to all the distinguished guests; and to all

the friends that I see in this audience: It is an incredible honor to be with you as we pay tribute to a remarkable institution and one that makes claim on our moral imagination.

Being here with you tonight, I'm taken back to the visit to Buchenwald that I took in the very first months of my Presidency. And I was there with my dear friend Elie Wiesel. As most of you know, he had endured that camp as a teenager. And we walked among the guard towers and the barbed wire. We saw the ovens and the crematorium. We saw the memorial to the prisoners, a steel plate heated to the temperature of the human body, as a reminder of our common humanity. And at the end of our visit, as we stood outside the place where his father and so many other souls had perished, Elie spoke these words. He said: "Memory has become a sacred duty of all people of good will." Memory has become a sacred duty of all people of good will.

And that's what brings us here tonight. That's the duty that Steven and all of you embrace: the "sacred duty" of memory.

Now, just a few decades ago, many survivors of the Shoah were reluctant to share their stories. But one survivor living here in Los Angeles, a leather goods merchant named Poldek Pfefferberg, insisted on telling anybody who would listen about the man who had saved his life, a man named Oskar Schindler. And thanks to Poldek's persistence, Schindler's story was published as a novel, and the world eventually came to see and understand the Holocaust like never before in Steven's remarkable film, "Schindler's List," brought to life in a masterful way by Liam Neeson. And we were reminded that the Holocaust was not a matter of distant history or abstract horror. The voices—the memories—of survivors became immediate and intimate, became a part of all of us.

I loved what the teacher said in the video about how it entered into our DNA. That's what stories do. We're storytelling animals. That's what Steven does. That's what Bruce does—tells a story that stitches up our fates with the fates of others. And that film gave us each a stake in that terrible history and a stake in ensuring such atrocities never happen again.

Now, if the story had ended there, it would have been enough—*dayenu.* But Steven didn't stop with "Schindler's List," because there were too many other stories to tell. So he created this foundation to undertake what he called "a rescue mission," preserving the memories that would otherwise be lost to time.

Over the past two decades, you've recorded tens of thousands of interviews in dozens of countries and languages, documented the experience not only of the Holocaust, but of atrocities before and since. As you heard tonight with Celina's incredible eloquence, you freed voices that could tell their own story in their own way. And as Michelle Clark described so powerfully this evening, you've turned that testimony into tools that can be used by scholars and students all around the world.

Now, Steven, I know that for you, like so many here, this is deeply personal. You lost distant relatives in the Holocaust and heard your mother pass on stories told by survivors. And as you said just a few days ago, the story of the Shoah is the story that you were put on this Earth to tell. So to you and everybody at the Shoah Foundation and for all that you've done, for setting alight an eternal flame of testimony that can't be extinguished and cannot be denied, we express our deepest gratitude.

Of course, none of these stories could be preserved without the men and women with the courage to tell them. And I think sometimes how hard it must be to return to those moments, to remember those darkest of days, to recount how loved ones—husbands, wives, sons, daughters—were taken away. And as Steven mentioned, my great-uncle was a soldier in the 89th Infantry Division, helping to liberate Ohrdruf, a part of Buchenwald. And what he saw during the war left him so shaken that, upon his return to the States, he could not speak of his memories for years to come. We didn't have a word for it back then, but he returned and closed himself off for months, so shaken was he just to witness what had happened, much less experience it.

So I want to say a special word to the survivors who are with us this evening, not just of

the Holocaust, but as Steven noted, survivors of other unimaginable crimes. Every day that you have lived, every child and grandchild that your families have brought into this world has served as the ultimate rebuke to evil and the ultimate expression of love and hope. And you are an inspiration to every single one of us. And on behalf of all of us, thank you for the example of your lives and sharing your stories with us and the world. Thank you. We are grateful to you.

Now, let me add that, as Americans, we're proud to be a country that welcomed so many Holocaust survivors in the wake of World War II. As President, I'm proud that we're doing more, as Steven noted, to stand with Holocaust survivors in America. We announced Aviva Sufian as our first-ever Special Envoy to help support Holocaust survivors living in the United States. I'm pleased that Aviva is here tonight. We've proposed a new Survivor Assistance Fund to help Holocaust survivors in our country live in dignity and free from poverty. We're already working with Members of Congress and many of your organizations on this project, and tonight I'd invite more of you to join us. We need to keep faith with these survivors who already have given so much.

The work of this foundation, the testimonies of survivors like those with us tonight, also remind us that the purpose of memory is not simply to preserve the past, it is to protect the future. We tell stories, we're compelled to tell stories, but there are stories that bring out the best in us, and there are stories that bring out the worst. The voices of those recorded and unrecorded, those who survived and those who perished, call upon us—implore us and challenge us—to turn "never forget" into "never again."

And we only need to look at today's headlines—the devastation of Syria, the murders and kidnappings in Nigeria, sectarian conflict, the tribal conflicts—to see that we have not yet extinguished man's darkest impulses. There are some bad stories out there that are being told to children, and they're learning to hate early. They're learning to fear those who are not like them early.

And none of the tragedies that we see today may rise to the full horror of the Holocaust. The individuals who are the victims of such unspeakable cruelty, they make a claim on our conscience. They demand our attention, that we not turn away, that we choose empathy over indifference, and that our empathy leads to action. And that's not always easy. One of the powerful things about Schindler's story was recognizing that we have to act even where there is sometimes ambiguity; even when the path is not always clearly lit, we have to try.

And that includes confronting a rising tide of anti-Semitism around the world. We've seen attacks on Jews in the streets of major Western cities, public places marred by swastikas. From some foreign governments we hear the worst kinds of anti-Semitic scapegoating. In Ukraine, as Steven mentioned, we saw those disgusting pamphlets from masked men calling on Jews to register. And tragically, we saw a shooting here at home, in Overland Park in Kansas.

And it would be tempting to dismiss these as isolated incidents, but if the memories of the Shoah survivors teach us anything, it is that silence is evil's greatest coconspirator. And it's up to us—each of us, every one of us—to forcefully condemn any denial of the Holocaust. It's up to us to combat not only anti-Semitism, but racism and bigotry and intolerance in all their forms, here and around the world. It's up to us to speak out against rhetoric that threatens the existence of a Jewish homeland and to sustain America's unshakeable commitment to Israel's security. And it is up to us to search our own hearts—to search ourselves—for those stories that have no place in this world. Because it's easy sometimes to project out and worry about others and their hatreds and their bigotries and their blind spots. It's not always as easy for us to examine ourselves.

Standing up to anti-Semitism is not simply about protecting one community or one religious group. There is no such thing as "targeted" hatred. In Overland Park, a man went to a Jewish community center and a nursing home named Village Shalom and started shooting, and none of the people he murdered were

Jewish. Two were Methodist. One was Catholic. All were innocent.

We cannot eliminate evil from every heart or hatred from every mind. But what we can do, and what we must do, is make sure our children and their children learn their history so that they might not repeat it. We can teach our children the hazards of tribalism. We can teach our children to speak out against the casual slur. We can teach them there is no "them," there's only "us." And here in America, we can celebrate a nation in which Christians and Muslims go to Jewish community centers and where Jews go to Church vigils; a nation where, through fits and starts, through sacrifice and individual courage, we have struggled to hear the truth and live out the truth that Dr. King described: that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, that we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

By keeping the memories alive, by telling stories, by hearing those stories, we can do our part to fulfill the mitzvah, the commandment of saving a life. I think of Pinchas Gutter, a man who lived through the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and survived the Majdanek death camp. Today he serves as a volunteer educator at the Shoah Foundation. "I tell my story," he says, "for the purpose of improving humanity, drop by drop by drop. Like a drop of water falls on a stone and erodes it, so, hopefully, by telling my story over and over again, I will achieve the purpose of making the world a better place to live in."

Those are the words of one survivor—performing that "sacred duty" of memory—that will echo throughout eternity. Those are good words for all of us to live by.

I have this remarkable title right now—President of the United States—and yet every day when I wake up and I think about young girls in Nigeria or children caught up in the conflict in Syria, when there are times in which I want to reach out and save those kids, and having to think through what levers, what power do we have at any given moment, I think, "drop by drop by drop," that we can erode and wear down these forces that are so destructive, that we can tell a different story.

And because of your work—because of your work, Steven, and the work of all who supported you—our children and their children and their children's children will hear from the survivors, but they'll also hear from the liberators, the Righteous Among the Nations. And because of your work, their stories, years and decades from now, will still be wearing down bigotry and eroding apathy and opening hearts, "drop by drop by drop."

And as those hearts open, that empowers those of us in positions of power. Because even the President can't do these things alone. Drop by drop by drop. That's the power of stories. And as a consequence, the world will be a better place, and the souls will be bound up in the bonds of eternal life. Their memories will be a blessing and they will help us make real our solemn vow: "Never forget" and "never again."

So thank you, Steven, for your incredible work. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:36 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Steven A. Spielberg, honorary chair, and Robert J. Katz, chair, USC Shoah Foundation; Nobel Prize winner, author, and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel; musician Bruce Springsteen; Holocaust survivor Celina Biniaz; Michelle Sadrena Clark, teacher, High Tech High North County in San Marcos, CA; Leah Adler, mother of Mr. Spielberg; Special Envoy for U.S. Holocaust Survivor Services Aviva Sufian; and Frazier Glenn Miller, Jr., suspected gunman in the April 13 shootings at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and the Village Shalom assisted living center in Overland Park, KS. He also referred to his great-uncle Charles Payne.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Lunch in La Jolla, California

May 8, 2014

Thank you. Well, first of all, let me just say thank you to Irwin and Joan and the whole Jacobs family. They have been great friends for, as Irwin noted, a very long time. Although, I am reminded of the story that Lincoln told. When Lincoln was President, anybody could line up and just wait and potentially get an audience with the President; the Secret Service was not active in the same fashion back then. Finally, a guy comes, and he says, "Listen, I've been one of your supporters, I worked hard, made sure that you were on the ballot, did everything possible." And Lincoln stopped him, and he said, "Sir, are you saying that you're responsible for my Presidency?" And he says yes. And Lincoln says, "I forgive you." [*Laughter*]

Part of the reason why it is so wonderful to see Irwin and Joan, whether it's in Washington or here, is their story embodies America. Their story says something about California. We were talking earlier about the two of them being at MIT in the engineering department and coming out here for a couple of days. And originally, the thought was, maybe you'd come out here and you'd start up this engineering department in this new school in the Wild West, in San Diego—there's not much around. And they thought, well, that's a bad idea. MIT, one of the greatest institutions in the world, why would I leave that? And apparently, after a couple of days, they said, oh, maybe this is really not so bad. [*Laughter*]

And then for Irwin not only to help establish one of the finest engineering schools in the country, but then to be able to use his incredible gifts to do well by doing good and helping to revolutionize all of our lives through his innovations—that's what we're about. That's what America is about. And so being here with them today reminds me of what it is that makes America so special. And so we're very grateful to them. [*Applause*] Absolutely. And they've got some really good-looking grandkids—[*laughter*]—that I had a chance to meet.

I also want to acknowledge somebody who is a great friend of middle class families, working families, people who are striving, people who are working hard and just want to try to pass on something a little bit better to their kids, and also somebody who always has my back and who I couldn't be prouder to be friends with as well as working colleagues. Not only did we accomplish a great deal when she was Speaker, we're going to accomplish that much more once we get her back in: Nancy Pelosi is here.

And finally, I want to acknowledge not an elected official, but somebody who has an even tougher job: a spouse of an elected official. Where did Lynn go? There's Lynn. And her son Ben is right there. Some of you know that Scott Peters is our Congressman here, and he couldn't be here because he is actually doing his job. [*Laughter*] But Scott is an example of the kind of people we want in Washington: there for the right reasons, there with the right values in a tough district. And that's the reason we're here today, is to make sure that all of you understand the urgency of the moment.

I'm going to speak relatively briefly because I think we've got some time for questions. Is that correct? Did I get that right? I hope so. Okay. [*Laughter*]

When I came into office, the American economy was in a freefall that people don't still fully appreciate. By a number of economic indicators, things were collapsing faster than they did in 1929. The pace of job loss was unbelievable. The financial system worldwide was on the brink of collapse. And by most measures, what we've accomplished together as a country over the last 5 years has been significant: 9.2 million new jobs, an auto industry that has come roaring back, a financial system that's stabilized, trillions of dollars of wealth recovered and restored because housing came back and people's 401 pensions bounced back. We've been able to double the amount of clean energy that we produce. We've been able to increase fuel efficiency standards on cars, reduce

the amount of carbon that we were emitting faster than any of the other developed countries around the world.

By a lot of measures, we've made real progress. And yet what we also know is that the American public is anxious. They're worried, partly because they remember what happened in 2007 and 2008, and the shocks that they experienced in their own lives: seeing, if they didn't lose their job, maybe somebody in their family lost their job; if they didn't lose their home, maybe somebody in their family lost their home; or their own homes they saw plummeting in value. But also because, for a couple of decades now, even when we're growing, even when corporate profits are soaring, incomes, wages have not gone up. For most of us in this room who have done extraordinarily well, we've done even better during these periods. But for ordinary Americans, growths in productivity, the incredible innovation and transformation of our economy hasn't translated into greater financial security. It hasn't translated into the sense that the next generation can do what Irwin did and what Joan did—that maybe our horizons are more limited. That's how people feel.

And part of what contributes to that is the sense that nobody in Washington cares about them or what people in Washington care about is their own jobs, their own positions, their own perks, squabbling between the two parties. And so not only have we seen in Congress—in particular, over the last 3 to 4 years—an utter failure to address the concerns of ordinary middle class families, but that reinforces, then, people's sense that there's no point in us getting involved at all and increases apathy or a lack of confidence in our Government.

Now, those are the facts. But here's both the challenge and the opportunity: It doesn't have to be that way. The truth of the matter is, is that the reason that we have not seen Washington address the core concerns of too many working families around the country is that you have a party that has been captive to an ideology—to a theory of economics—that says those folks, they're on their own, and government doesn't have an appropriate role to play.

And our goal and our task in this midterm has to be to break that grip, that particular view, that particular wrongheaded vision this country has so that we can get back to the business of investing in the American people and investing in America's future.

And we can do it, because on issue after issue, the majority of Americans actually agree with us. The majority of Americans think we should be raising the minimum wage. If you work full time in this country, you shouldn't be living in poverty. In fact, a significant plurality of Republicans agree with that.

The majority of Americans think that you should get paid equal for equal work, that women shouldn't be paid less than men, and that there should be enforcement of that. Republicans don't agree with it, but the American people do.

The majority of American people think we should reform a broken immigration system that can help reduce our deficits, create more growth, create more innovation, and even as we are securing our borders and making sure we're a nation of laws, we're also reminding ourselves that we're a nation of immigrants and that's what makes this country so special. Republicans, so far, at least, haven't been willing to step up. To their credit, some in the Senate have. But the House Republicans have stubbornly refused to even allow a vote on the issue.

The majority of Americans think that we should be investing in education, in early childhood education, in making sure that more young people have access to college, to making sure that we're investing in developing more science and math teachers and engineering students, because they understand innovation is vital to our growth. They think we should be investing more in basic research that allows for that innovation to take place. The Republican budget slashes all those things.

So the American people are on our side on the issues; they just have lost faith that we can actually make it happen. And this is where the challenge comes in. In order for us to not simply play defense, but actually go back on the offensive on behalf of the American people, on

behalf of striving families all across this country, including right here in California, we've got to have folks like Nancy Pelosi guiding the debate. And the only way that happens is if we feel the same sense of urgency about midterms as we do for Presidential elections.

The Democrats have a congenital disease: We get really excited about Presidential elections, and then during midterms, we fall asleep. And partly, it's the nature of our voters. We're disproportionately young, disproportionately minority, disproportionately working class. Folks are busy. They've got a lot of stuff going on. And so we tend to drop off during midterms. That's what happened in 2010.

And I promised Michelle in 2012 this is going to be my last campaign. It turns out, I had to say to her, "Honey, I've got one more." Because on every issue that people here care about, whether it's climate change or women's reproductive health or rebuilding our infrastructure or basic research, we are not going to be able to make the kind of progress we need—regardless of how hard I push, regardless of how many administrative actions I take—we're not going to be able to go where we need to go and can go and should go unless I've got a Congress that's willing to work with me.

I've said before, and I'll say again: I'm willing to work with Republicans on any of these issues. But you've got to believe in climate change to want to work with me on climate change. [*Laughter*] You've got to believe that there is a problem with equal pay in order to work with me to vindicate that value. And right now we don't have that.

So I am going to need everybody here to feel the same sense of urgency as so many of you showed when I was running in 2008 and 2012. This is a priority. Not for me, I'm not going to be on the ballot. It is a priority for you and your children and your grandchildren. Because if we do the things that we need to do, if we make the investments we need to make, then the 21st century is going to be the American century just like the previous one.

And if we don't, then the anxieties of so many Americans are going to be justified. And that's not the kind of America we want to live in. We want an America that is hopeful and growing and dynamic and vital and diverse and tolerant and vindicates the values of equality and fraternity that are so important to our history. That's the better future. That's the one we have to choose. But it's going to require all of us to do our work in this midterm election.

And I know I'm preaching to the choir, because otherwise you wouldn't be here. But I'm going to need you to go out there and talk to your friends and neighbors and your coworkers. And even if they argue back a little bit, you'll be armed with the facts. The truth is on your side on this, and this is a righteous cause.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:47 p.m. at the residence of Irwin M. and Joan K. Jacobs. In his remarks, he referred to Lynn E. Gorguze, president and chief executive officer, Cameron Holdings Corp., and her son Ben Peters. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Agreement for Cooperation Between the United States and Vietnam on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

May 8, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153(b), (d)) (the "Act"), the text of a proposed Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (the "Agreement"). I am also pleased to transmit my written approval, au-

thorization, and determination concerning the Agreement, and an unclassified Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement (NPAS) concerning the Agreement. (In accordance with section 123 of the Act, as amended by title XII of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–277), a classified annex to the NPAS, prepared by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, summarizing relevant classified information, will be submitted to the Congress separately.) The joint memorandum submitted to me by the Secretaries of State and Energy and a letter from the Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission stating the views of the Commission are also enclosed. An addendum to the NPAS containing a comprehensive analysis of Vietnam's export control system with respect to nuclear-related matters, including interactions with other countries of proliferation concern and the actual or suspected nuclear, dual-use, or missile-related transfers to such countries, pursuant to section 102A of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 403–1), as amended, is being submitted separately by the Director of National Intelligence.

The proposed Agreement has been negotiated in accordance with the Act and other applicable law. In my judgment, it meets all applicable statutory requirements and will advance the nonproliferation and other foreign policy interests of the United States.

The proposed Agreement provides a comprehensive framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation with Vietnam based on a mutual commitment to nuclear nonproliferation. Vietnam has affirmed that it does not intend to seek to acquire sensitive fuel cycle capabilities, but instead will rely upon the international market in order to ensure a reliable nuclear fuel supply for Vietnam. This political commitment by Vietnam has been reaffirmed in the preamble of the proposed Agreement. The Agreement also contains a legally binding provision that prohibits Vietnam from enriching or reprocessing U.S.-origin material without U.S. consent.

The proposed Agreement will have an initial term of 30 years from the date of its entry into force, and will continue in force thereafter for additional periods of 5 years each. Either party may terminate the Agreement on 6 months' advance written notice at the end of the initial 30 year term or at the end of any subsequent 5-year period. Additionally, either party may terminate the Agreement on 1 year's written notice. I recognize the importance of executive branch consultations with the Congress regarding the status of the Agreement prior to the end of the 30-year period after entry into force and prior to the end of each 5-year period thereafter. To that end, it is my strong recommendation that future administrations conduct such consultations with the appropriate congressional committees at the appropriate times.

The proposed Agreement permits the transfer of information, material, equipment (including reactors), and components for nuclear research and nuclear power production. It does not permit transfers of Restricted Data, sensitive nuclear technology, sensitive nuclear facilities, or major critical components of such facilities. In the event of termination of the Agreement, key nonproliferation conditions and controls continue with respect to material, equipment, and components subject to the Agreement.

Vietnam is a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Vietnam has in force a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Vietnam is a party to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, which establishes international standards of physical protection for the use, storage, and transport of nuclear material, and has ratified the 2005 Amendment to the Convention. A more detailed discussion of Vietnam's intended civil nuclear program and its nuclear nonproliferation policies and practices, including its nuclear export policies and practices, is provided in the NPAS and in a classified annex to the NPAS submitted to you separately. As noted above, the Director of National

Intelligence will provide an addendum to the NPAS containing a comprehensive analysis of Vietnam's export control system with respect to nuclear-related matters.

I have considered the views and recommendations of the interested departments and agencies in reviewing the proposed Agreement and have determined that its performance will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved the Agreement and authorized its execution and urge that the Congress give it favorable consideration.

This transmission shall constitute a submittal for purposes of both sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Act. My Administration is prepared to begin immediately the consultations with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee as provided for in section 123 b. Upon completion of the 30 days of continuous session review provided for in section 123 b., the 60 days of continuous session review provided for in section 123 d. shall commence.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
May 8, 2014.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in San Jose, California

May 8, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello, California!

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back! It is good to be back in San Jose. I think one of the times I came here, I started singing the Dionne Warwick song. Did I do that? [*Laughter*] It was pretty good.

Audience member. Do it again!

The President. No, I'm not going to do it tonight. [*Laughter*] Maybe after the midterms. Maybe I'll sing it to you separately. [*Laughter*]

A couple of people I want to thank: First of all, our outstanding cohosts, Sam and Marissa. Please give them a big round of applause. We've got your own State assemblywoman, Nora Campos, here. Way to go, Nora! There she is. And we have our outstanding DNC finance chair, Henry Muñoz, here. And all of you are here. Yay!

I am thrilled to see all of you. Some of you are old friends who have been working with me since I was a U.S. Senator and nobody could pronounce my name. Some of you have been knowing me since I was a State senator. [*Applause*] Exactly. See, you've got an Illinois guy here.

Audience member. North Side.

The President. We've got a Chicago guy. All right, I can't name all the places you guys are from. [*Laughter*] A lot of you worked on the campaign and on OFA, and I couldn't be more grateful for that. And I want to give you a little update about where we are.

We came into office at a time when America was in dire straits, and we have made enormous progress over the last 5-something years. We've created 9.2 million jobs. Auto industry has come roaring back. We have reduced our oil imports. We are producing more clean energy than ever before. We have seen college attendance go up; we've seen high school dropouts go down. And there are millions of Americans all across the country, including right here in California, who finally have the financial and emotional security of affordable health care. That has all happened over the last 5½ years.

But for all that we've done—for the war in Iraq that we've ended and the war in Afghanistan that we're bringing to an honorable close, for all the work we're doing on climate change and making sure that we bequeath to our children and our grandchildren the kind of planet that allows them to thrive and prosper—for all those efforts, we know that we've got more work to do.

We know that despite economic growth and close to record corporate profits, despite the fact that folks at the very top are doing better than ever, that there are too many families all across the country who are still struggling to get by, who work hard every day, but have trouble making ends meet at the end of the month. We know that people still feel insecure about their future, about the possibilities of retirement. We know that there are folks who work hard every day and are still in poverty. We know that there are folks who work hard every day, but are still living in the shadows because of a broken immigration system.

We know that the investments that we need to make sure that every child in America—not just my kid or your kid, but every child in America—has an opportunity to get a world-class education, that those investments have not yet been fully forthcoming. We know that.

And that's why November is so important. The Republicans who run the House of Representatives right now and want to take over the Senate——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience member. Vote!

The President. Vote! Work!

They—but they have said no to every proposal that we know could make a difference in the lives of hard-working Americans. They've said no to proposals that would rebuild our infrastructure. They've said no to proposals that would increase basic research that drives the innovation that has made this region the envy of the world. They have said no to equal pay for equal work. In fact, they've denied that there's even a problem. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Really?

The President. I'm just saying. [*Laughter*]

They said no to increasing the minimum wage. They've said no to helping kids afford college. They even shut down the Government and almost created another global financial catastrophe because they wanted to get their way.

Now, to be fair, they did say yes to their own budget, except when you look at the budget, what they're saying yes to are cuts in Medicaid, cuts in education, cuts in basic research. But what they do preserve are tax breaks for folks who don't need them, that aren't going to grow the economy.

And look, Republicans are patriots. They love their country. They love their families. They want America to thrive. But they are operating on a theory that time and again has proven to be wrong. It's a theory that says you're on your own. It's a theory that says if we just reward folks at the very top, then everybody else is going to do just fine. It's a theory that discounts the possibility of common action in order to make sure that opportunity is real for every American and not just some. They have a different theory about how America moves forward. And so they just keep on offering again and again the same failed theories that have been punishing the middle class and failing America for decades now.

And so when I think about what's at stake in this election, it's not just a matter of a seat here or a seat there. It's about competing visions of how America moves forward. And I believe that America moves forward when we recognize that we're all in it together. I believe in an America where we rise together, where the economy is built from the bottom up and the middle out.

I believe in an America where we are investing in innovation and where, although the private sector is driving our growth, it is based on an acknowledgment that when we've got skilled people and we've got outstanding teachers and we are honoring our researchers and our universities, that's the dynamism that has always put us at the forefront. That's what's at stake. That's what I believe.

And so the question is, what are we going to do about it in this midterm? The choices couldn't be clearer. The choices could not be clearer. As Democrats, I believe that we should be fighting for equal pay for equal work; they do not. That's a choice. As a Democrat, I believe that opportunity for all means that if you work full time, you should not be in poverty. We should increase the minimum wage. It's the right thing to do.

As a Democrat, I believe in investing in early childhood education. We know it works. We want to give every child the best chance possible to succeed. They have a different view. As a Democrat, I believe that we should make college affordable for every young person who's got the energy and drive to succeed—every child, not just some. They've got a different view.

So I know what we stand for. And sometimes, I've got to say that when you look at reporting of what's happening in Washington—and let's face it, Washington is not working the way it's supposed to—then sometimes, you'd get the impression that, yes, both parties just are bickering and arguing and that's why things don't work.

Now, let's—I've got a confession to make: The Democratic Party is not perfect. [*Laughter*] I know that's crazy to say at a DNC event. [*Laughter*] But there are times where folks make mistakes. There are some elected officials who don't show the courage of their convictions. There are times where I get frustrated. And we have to be self-critical and make sure that we're constantly asking ourselves, are we serving the folks who sent us here as well as we should? But on the big issues, on our core convictions, we're on the right side of the issues.

On immigration, we believe in comprehensive immigration reform that gives people a chance and that would improve our economy. On climate change, we believe in science, and we think it's important for us to take action, and that if we invest in clean energy, we can create jobs and opportunity here in the United States at the same time as we're making sure that we've got an environment that is what we want for our children and our grandchildren. We're on the right side of that. The other side isn't. That's just the bottom line.

When it comes to education, when it comes to the minimum wage, when it comes to equal pay, when it comes to making investments in infrastructure, when it comes to basic research, when it comes to the things that would help drive this economy right now, we're on the right side of the issues. And the reason that we've got gridlock right now is, you've got another party that has been captured by folks who are on the wrong side of the issue.

Now, that's on inevitable. I mean, I come from Illinois—[*laughter*]—and that's the Land of Lincoln, a great Republican President. Those of you who care about the environment, our—probably our greatest environmental President: Teddy Roosevelt, Republican. So it's not inevitable; this does not have to be how it is. But it is how it is right now. And if we are serious about solving the problems that matter for future generations, if we are serious about making sure that there are good jobs out there that pay a living wage, if we're serious about fixing a broken immigration system, if we are serious about investing in our schools, if we are serious about making college affordable, if we are serious about making sure that our veterans are properly cared for, if we are serious about a clean energy economy, if we're serious about innovation, then we've got to fix Congress.

And the way we're going to fix Congress is not just to get cynical and sit back and complain and grouse and say, a plague on both your houses. The way to fix Congress is, take a look at who stands for the things you care about and who doesn't and get the folks who don't out of the way so we can make progress in America. And that's what this midterm election is all about.

I mean, what exactly are the plans of the other side right now?

Audience member. Nothing!

The President. No, that's not true. They've got one plan. They've taken 50 votes to repeal Obamacare, the Affordable Care Act, and I guess they're going to try to take 50 more, because that's all they talk about. And let me tell you something. You've got 8 million people who signed up on these exchanges; you've got millions more who are benefiting from expanded Medicaid. You've got 3 million young people who are able to stay on their parent's plan. Millions of people across the country——

Audience member. Need it.

The President. ——are better off. I meet them every day. And I can't explain to you why

it is that they are so obsessed with making sure those folks don't have health insurance. But we're on the right side of history on that issue. And if that's all they've got—if that's all they've got—then they shouldn't be running either Chamber. They shouldn't be running the House, and they should—sure should not be running the Senate. And they sure shouldn't be making appointments to the Supreme Court.

Audience members. No!

The President. And they shouldn't be blocking mine.

Now, I know I'm preaching to the choir. [*Laughter*] But we're just kind of getting started here on this campaign season, and I want to kind of get us warmed up, have got to get the vocal chords working. [*Laughter*]

There's one problem we've got. Our problem is not that the public doesn't agree with us. If you look on the issues that we're fighting for, the majority of the American public is on our side. The majority believes in raising the minimum wage. The majority of Americans believe in equal pay for equal work. The majority of Americans want to see us invest in education and job training and apprenticeships. The majority of Americans think we should be putting people back to work rebuilding our infrastructure. A majority of Americans think that it's the right thing to do to develop a clean energy economy. A majority of Americans want immigration reform. So what's the problem?

Audience member. Not voting.

The President. Say that again.

Audience member. They're not voting!

The President. They're not voting. And in particular, Democrats have a congenital defect when it comes to our politics, and that is, we like voting during Presidential years, and during the midterms, we don't vote. And so you already have lower voting totals during the midterms, and it's our folks that stay home.

And maybe in normal times that's okay, although I don't think it's ever okay for us not to vote. But in this midterm, with the stakes as high as they are, with the progress that needs to be made, with families out there who are desperate to see a Washington that is on their side, we're going to have to make sure that we are coming out with the same urgency and the same enthusiasm that we typically show during Presidential years. That's what we're going to need.

And that's where all of you come in. It's not enough that you're going to vote. You're going to have to grab your mom, dad, cousins, uncles, coworkers, friends, family, and you are going to have to explain to them the stakes involved in this election.

And that's what the DNC is about. The contributions you make today are to ensure that we've got the infrastructure, the architecture, so that an army of young people and not-so-young people, but young at heart, young in spirit, are out there working in precincts and in neighborhoods, delivering a message about what the stakes are in this election and making sure that people know they need to come out and vote.

Now, I know that we live at a time where cynicism too often passes off as wisdom. And this country has been through a lot over these last 5 years. But I want to close by just letting you know this. I travel around the world a lot. I study global trends. I speak to world leaders and prominent businesses who operate in every corner of the Earth. And I will tell you that the assessment outside of the United States is that we've got all the best cards. We still have the most innovative, dynamic economy in the world. We still have the best universities in the world. We still have the most productive workers in the world.

We have this incredible opportunity to develop a clean energy economy, even as traditional sources of energy, we've got more than most advanced countries. We have this incredible vibrancy that is on display right here in this community, people from all around the world coming here, hungry, striving, ready to innovate. There's no other country that looks like us. It's a huge gift. The problem is that we'll waste that gift if we don't make the right choices.

So what I want everybody to know is, is that for all the challenges we have and for all the legitimate reasons why people get discouraged, our future is bright if we make the right choices. Our future is bright if people shake off

whatever is holding them back and they go to the polls. Our future is bright if people understand the stakes involved. Our future is bright if you and I, we're all out there working together to make sure that folks know that the decisions we make right now are going to matter to that young man and that young lady and our kids and our grandkids. And we don't have time to wait.

So I don't have patience for cynicism right now. I think it's too easy. I think it's an excuse. The future is there for us to seize, but we've got to seize it.

Audience member. Mr. Obama!

The President. And if we do, then I guarantee you——

Audience member. Ethiopia needs freedom! Freedom for Ethiopia, Mr. Obama!

The President. Hold on. I agree with you, although, why don't I talk about it later because I'm just about to finish. [*Laughter*] You and me, we'll talk about it. All right. I'm going to be coming around.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. There you go.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. I agree with you.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. I want to hear from you.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. You kind of screwed up my ending, but that's okay. [*Laughter*] The—that's okay. And we've got free speech in this country, which is great too.

So bottom line is this, bottom line is this: This is not the end, this is just the beginning. I'm going to need every one of you to sign up to make sure that you are going to continue to work with the DNC. I am going to be, I guarantee you, back in California sometime before November. And when I come back, I expect everybody here to report back to me that you have been out there working to make sure that we are having a Democratic Senate and a Democratic House.

Are you with me?

Audience members. Yeah!

The President. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yeah!

The President. You ready to go?

Audience members. Yeah!

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 p.m. at the Fairmont San Jose Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sam Altman, partner, Y Combinator; and Marissa Mayer, chief executive officer, Yahoo! Inc.

Remarks at a Walmart Store in Mountain View, California
May 9, 2014

The President. Hello, Mountain View! Well, it's good to be in California. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. This is actually my third day on the West Coast. On Wednesday, we went to L.A., then we went to San Diego, we're here in the Bay Area. But I have to get back because Sunday is what?

Audience members. Mother's Day!

The President. It is Mother's Day. That is a public service announcement. Do not forget. [*Laughter*] It's Mother's Day.

I told Michelle one time, I said, how come people put so much emphasis on Mother's Day, and Father's Day not so much? [*Laughter*] She said every day other than Mother's Day is Father's Day—[*laughter*]—which I thought kind of quieted me down.

I want to thank your mayor, Chris Clark, for hosting us. I want to thank the folks at Walmart. And I know this looks like a typical Walmart, but it is different, and that's why I'm here. A few years ago, you decided to put solar panels on the roof of the store. You replaced some traditional light bulbs with LEDs. You made refrigerator cases more efficient. And you even put in a charging station for electric vehicles. And all told, those upgrades created dozens of construction jobs and helped this store save money on its energy bills. And that's why I'm here today, because more and more

companies like Walmart are realizing that wasting less energy isn't just good for the planet, it's good for business. It's good for the bottom line.

[*At this point, a baby cried out.*]

The President. Yes, see, he agrees. [*Applause*] And it means jobs.

Changing the way we use energy is just one of the ways Americans have been working so hard to move this country forward. In the wake of the worst financial crisis and then economic crisis in generations, our businesses now have created over 9.2 million new jobs. Housing market that was reeling is rebounding. Our auto industry that was flatlining is now booming. You've got a manufacturing sector that had lost a third of its jobs during the nineties and now is adding jobs for the first time. More than 8 million Americans have now signed up for health care coverage through the Affordable Care Act. Troops that were fighting two wars are coming home. And rather than create jobs in other countries, more companies are actually choosing to create jobs and invest right here in the United States of America.

But we've got a long way to go before we get to where we need to be, which is an economy where everybody who works hard, everybody who takes responsibility, has a chance to get ahead; and that we have a chance to build an economy that works not just for a few at the top, but for everybody. That's our goal: the idea that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, what your last name is, if you work hard, if you take responsibility, you can make it here in America.

And that starts with helping businesses create more good jobs. One of the biggest factors in bringing jobs back to America has been our commitment to American energy over the last 5 years. When I took office, we set out to break our dependence on foreign oil. Today, America is closer to energy independence than we have been in decades. We generate more renewable energy than ever, with tens of thousands of good American jobs to show for it. We produce more natural gas than anyone, and nearly everybody's energy bill is lower because of it. So are our carbon emissions that cause climate change.

We set new fuel standards for our cars and trucks so that they'll go twice as far on a gallon of gas by the middle of the next decade. That saves the typical family about $8,000 at the pump. And for the first time in nearly 20 years, America produces more oil here at home than we buy from other countries.

So we're producing more traditional energy, but we're also becoming a leader in the energy sources of the future. We're becoming a global leader in solar, thanks in part to the investments we've made in the Recovery Act. Over the past few years, the cost of solar panels have fallen by 60 percent; solar installations have increased by 500 percent. Every 4 minutes, another American home or business goes solar, and every panel is pounded into place by a worker whose job cannot be shipped overseas.

So today, no matter where you live or where you do business, solar is getting cheaper and is getting easier to use than before. And with more businesses and rural cooperatives and homes choosing solar, prices keep coming down, manufacturers keep getting more innovative, and more jobs are created. So last year, jobs in the solar industry increased by 20 percent.

But we've got more work to do. And I want to work with Congress to do it. Unfortunately, Congress has not always been as visionary on these issues as we would like. It can be a little frustrating. But in this year of action, wherever I can go ahead and create my own opportunities for new jobs, I'm going to take it.

And so far, I've taken more than 20 executive actions, from launching new hubs to attracting more high-tech manufacturing jobs to America, to reforming our job training programs to make sure more Americans are getting the skills they need to get the jobs that exist right now.

And so today, here at Walmart, I want to announce a few more steps that we're taking that are going to be good for job growth and good for our economy and that we don't have to wait for Congress to do. They are going to be steps

that generate more clean energy, waste less energy overall, and leave our kids and our grandkids with a cleaner, safer planet in the process.

So let me list these out. Number one, we know that making buildings more energy efficient is one of the easiest, cheapest ways to create jobs, save money, and cut down on harmful pollution that causes climate change. It could save our businesses tens of billions of dollars a year on their energy bills, and they can then use that money to grow and hire more folks. It would put construction workers back to work installing new systems and technologies. So this is what you call a win-win-win.

So that's why, 3 years ago, I announced what we called the Better Buildings Initiative. It's an ambitious plan to improve the energy efficiency of America's commercial buildings by 20 percent by the year 2020. And already we've got 190 businesses and organizations that have signed on. On average, they're on track to meet their goal: cutting energy use by 2½ percent every single year. Together, they've already saved $300 million in energy costs. So we know it works.

And that's why, over the past few months, I've been picking up the phone and reaching out to more leaders to get them on board. And today, they're stepping up. From cities, school districts, businesses, and universities, you're seeing folks move on energy efficiency. GM is pledging to improve energy efficiency in 31 plants. University of Virginia is doing the same thing in its buildings. Cities like Little Rock, Kansas City, and Detroit are replacing regular street lights with more efficient LEDs.

And at Walmart, you've committed to reducing energy consumption across 850 million square feet of space. That's a lot. That's enough to cover more than half of the city of San Francisco. Taken together, this is going to make a difference, and it's the right thing to do for the planet, but it's also the right thing to do for the bottom line. Because when you save that money, you can pass that money back to consumers in the form of lower prices, or you can use it to create more jobs.

So folks in the private sector are doing their part to create jobs and reduce pollution and cut waste. I'm making sure the Federal Government does its part. Two years ago, I ordered $2 billion in energy upgrades to Federal buildings. Today I'm ordering an additional $2 billion in upgrades over the next 3 years. And these upgrades will create tens of thousands of construction jobs and save taxpayers billions of dollars.

The Department of Energy is putting a new efficiency standard—set of efficiency standards in place that could save businesses billions of dollars in energy costs and cut carbon pollution, and it's the equivalent of taking about 80 million cars off the road. And I want to thank Ernie Moniz, Secretary of Energy, and Secretary Donovan—Shaun Donovan of HUD—who are here today because they've shown extraordinary leadership on these issues. [*Applause*] That's worth applauding.

So that's the first announcement. Cities, schools, businesses, Federal Government—we're all going to pledge to waste less energy, and we've got concrete strategies that we know work.

The second announcement is about more Americans coming together to use more clean energy. Last month, I called up leaders from a whole range of industries and made the economic case for why solar is a good idea. And they listened. And today, more than 300 organizations—from homebuilders to affordable housing owners to companies like Home Depot and Apple—announced that they are going to expand the use of solar energy, thereby creating more jobs and cutting carbon pollution.

We've got public banks like Connecticut's Green Bank and private banks like Goldman Sachs ready to invest billions of dollars in renewable energy. The Treasury Department and IRS are making it easier for renewable energy companies to operate and attract investment. And we're going to support training programs at community colleges across the country that will help 50,000 workers earn the skills that solar companies are looking for right now.

Walmart has already got the most installed onsite solar capacity of any company in America. And now you've announced plans to double that capacity. And it's all part of your goal to

buy or produce 7 billion kilowatt hours of renewable energy by 2020, something that could save Walmart $1 billion a year in energy costs.

So we know that generating more clean energy, using less dirty energy, wasting less energy overall can be good for business and consumers. And it's also good for the world that we leave for our children.

So, together, the commitments we're announcing today prove that there are cost-effective ways to tackle climate change and create jobs at the same time. So often, when we hear about how we're going to deal with this really serious issue, people say we can't afford to do it; won't be good for the economy. It will be good for the economy long term, and if we don't, that will be bad for the economy. Rising sea levels, drought, more wildfires, more severe storms—those are bad for the economy. So we can't afford to wait. And there's no reason why we can't even go further than we are so far by working with States and utilities and other organizations to change the way we power our economy. Climate change is real, and we have to act now.

Earlier this week, I issued—or we issued a report that was years in the making called the National Climate Assessment. Hundreds of scientists, experts, and businesses, non-for-profits, local communities all contributed over the course of 4 years. What they found was, unequivocally, that climate change is not some far-off problem in the future. It's happening now. It's causing hardship now. It's affecting every sector of our economy and our society—more severe floods, more violent wildfires. It's already costing cities and States and families and businesses money.

Here in California, you've seen these effects firsthand. You know what's happening. And increasingly, more and more Americans do, including, by the way, many Republicans outside of Washington.

So, unfortunately, inside of Washington we've still got some climate deniers who shout loud, but they're wasting everybody's time on a settled debate. Climate change is a fact.

And while we know the shift to clean energy won't happen overnight, we've got to make some tough choices along the way. And we know that if we do, it's going to save us ultimately money and create jobs over the long term. That's what Walmart understands, and Walmart is pretty good at counting its pennies. [*Laughter*]

So that's why this fight is so important. That's why the sooner we work together to adapt the economy to our—to this reality of climate change, the more likely it is that we do right by our kids and leave a more stable world. And ultimately, that's what motivates a whole lot of us.

As Americans, we don't look backwards, we look forward. We don't fear the future, we seize it. We shape it. And when it comes to energy, we have a chance to shape that sector that is probably going to have more to do with how well our economy succeeds than just about any other. We are blessed when it comes to energy, but we're much more blessed when it comes to the innovation and the dynamism and the creativity of our economy.

If we do our part right now to rebuild an economy and transition to a clean energy future, we will create new jobs, we will reduce our dependence on foreign oil, we will leave our children with a better America and a better future.

So thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Thanks to all the companies who are doing the great work and the non-for-profits. We appreciate your leadership.

Thank you, guys. Happy Mother's Day, moms!

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:48 a.m.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Jose "Pepe" Mujica Cordano of Uruguay
May 12, 2014

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome President Mujica to the Oval Office and the White House. You know, why don't—do I have my translator? Why don't we translate this

statement? Come on over. My Spanish is shaky right now.

[*At this point, the interpreter arrived and sat next to President Obama.*]

Here we go. Let me try it again.

I want to welcome President Mujica and his delegation to the Oval Office. I have had the pleasure of, on several occasions, having discussions with President Mujica and have been consistently impressed with the progress that Uruguay has been making under his Presidency.

The United States and Uruguay has developed a strong relationship across a wide spectrum of issues. Our trade and commerce has expanded significantly. On the international front, we are very grateful that Uruguay is one of the largest contributors to U.N. peacekeeping in places like Haiti and Africa and has been responsible for helping to facilitate peace in some very volatile regions.

President Mujica personally has extraordinary credibility when it comes to issues of democracy and human rights, given his strong values and personal history, and is a leader on these issues throughout the hemisphere. And we share an interest in strengthening further the people-to-people bonds between our two countries, particularly around the issues of science, technology, and education.

So this gives us an opportunity to find ways that we can further deepen this relationship. We both think that there is room for additional work to expand trade and commerce between our countries. We want to see if we can expand exchanges, particularly for teachers and students. I want to hear from President Mujica additional ideas of how we can strengthen the broad trends of democratization and human rights in the hemisphere.

And we have a shared interest in social inclusion. Economically and socially, in both Uruguay and the United States, we have a potential great strength of a diverse population, and we want to exchange ideas about how we can make sure that our societies are open and benefiting all people and not just some.

So I very much appreciate the President's visit, although I will say, the first thing he said to me was that my hair has become much grayer since the last time he saw me. [*Laughter*]

Welcome.

President Mujica. Thank you. First, let me recognize the American people and its institutions that are represented by you, Mr. President Obama.

We live in the south. We have a soul of the south. We belong to a continent where our mother tongue is more or less Spanish. And we live in a time where we need to learn English —yes or yes. And you will have to become a bilingual country—yes or yes. Because the strength of Latin women is admirable, and they will fill this country with people who speak Spanish and Portuguese too—and Portuguese too.

Well, we have been looking towards everywhere, but towards ourselves a bit also. And from the humbleness of my little Uruguay, my people, who is there amongst an enormous area of fertile and much water, come here to seek out knowledge and research in all groups of the biological sciences, particularly in land, that require local research, because the continent must produce much food for the world. And besides, this is the most advanced country in the world for biological sciences, but we don't want to merely send students out, because they get married—[*laughter*]—and the American corporations pay more money, so we lose these qualified people. We have to bring U.S. teachers so they can come, but we need to make arrangements so that they can continue to contribute to Social Security here. Wisdom must be looked for there where it is.

And I must tell you that in Germany, I asked the same thing from Mrs. Merkel. And with the efficiency that Germans have, she set up a plan for 10,000 qualified retirees that are on call to spend some time and convey knowledge. And that I believe that in the long term, that's worth much more than money, everything that is being asked for. We must fight to get our children in the new generations new capacities, new knowledge. And that is going to be the best way to surge freedom, independence, rights.

Mr. President, who is speaking is an old smokes man. But in the world, per year, 8 million people are dying for smoking. And that is more than World War I, World War II. It's murder. We are in an arduous fight in Uruguay—very arduous—and we must fight against very strong interests. Governments must not be involved in private litigation, but here, we're fighting for life. And nobody must be distracted in this fight for life, because out of all values, the most important one is life itself.

Well, thank you. I'm wholeheartedly grateful to you. And I am getting old, and to be old means you don't want to leave home. I would like to be a little bit younger to see Mississippi, MIT, know the ranches in Los Angeles, the milk farms, other things. But please convey a hug. I embrace all agriculturalists of this Nation.

President Obama. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:06 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Mujica referred to Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany. President Mujica spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Ceremony Honoring the National Association of Police Organizations TOP COPS

May 12, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. It is a great honor to be here, one of my favorite events that we do every single year. And let me start by thanking Joe Biden not only for being a great Vice President—which he is—but also being a lifelong friend of law enforcement. Now, he and I have a special reason for loving law enforcement, because we have the unusual privilege of being surrounded by law enforcement every minute of every day. [*Laughter*] And they also protect the people we love most in the world, our families. So we're incredibly grateful to them and to all the law enforcement officers who serve and protect families and communities across the Nation every single day.

Some of the public servants who make sure America's police officers have what they need to do their jobs are also here today, and I just want to recognize them briefly. First of all, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson is here. Attorney General Eric Holder is here as well. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton is here. And I want to thank everybody from the National Association of Police Organizations, including your outstanding president, Tom Nee.

But most of all, we're here to welcome and congratulate our guests of honors, America's TOP COPS of 2014, and to thank their families—their spouses, moms, dads, sons, daughters—who love and support these heroes every single step of the way. So give them a big round of applause. [*Applause*] Good job. We know it takes a lot of courage to be a cop, but it also takes a lot of courage to love a cop—[*laughter*]—and to send them off to work every single day with a hug and a prayer for their safety. So all of you are heroes in my book as well.

The 53 officers, detectives, patrolmen, special agents, and troopers that we celebrate today are America's finest, the best of the best. They hail from different parts of the country, and different events brought them here today. But they share one important thing in common. When the moment came—when the shooting started or a bomb went off or a hostage was taken or a child screamed for help—they did not hesitate. They went into action. They ran toward the danger, not away from it. And they risked their lives to save the lives of others.

Now, I got a chance to spend a little time with these guys before they came out here.

When you talk to them—and this has been true every time we've done this, every single year—they'll always say, "I was just doing my job," insisting that they didn't do anything extraordinary. And they're right about one thing: There are heroes in every force, in every city, in every town across the Nation. And everyone standing up here owes something to police officers who aren't here, somebody who pushed them to do their best and had their backs when they needed it. So this is also a celebration for all law enforcement who are doing their jobs out there bravely and diligently, and we want to thank them for keeping us safe.

Having said that, even if these guys won't admit it, there is something special about these guys. This is the sixth year that I've welcomed TOP COPS to the White House, and every year, their stories are incredible. There are no exceptions.

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

There's somebody on the loose here! [*Laughter*] Oh no! She was making a break for it. [*Laughter*] That was great. Did you see her?

Vice President Joe Biden. Yes, I saw her. [*Laughter*]

The President. She was moving.

Vice President Biden. She could move quickly. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, yes. The—here are some of the reasons these officers are here today: surviving a violent ambush in the pitch-black woods while confronting an escaped felon convicted of sexual assault; engaging in hand-to-hand combat to take down someone seen trying to blow up a gas station near a major international airport; storming an underground bunker to rescue a kidnapped 5-year-old boy; braving a hail of gunfire to protect victims of domestic violence.

One of these officers, in protecting the public, took out a suspected cop-killing bank robber with what was described as a one-in-a-million shot. Another stopped a shooter by returning fire through the windshield of his patrol car, while making sure to wear his seat belt. [*Laughter*] One jumped a fence during his own Father's Day celebration when a boy screamed that someone was trying to kill his mom. He saved both the mother and her son, and now that little boy says he's thinking about becoming a cop as well.

And there are officers here who were in the thick of two attacks last year: the shooting at the Washington Naval Yard and the bombing at the Boston Marathon. On those awful days—and we all remember them—amid the smoke and the chaos, the courage of these officers shone through. And their quick thinking and levelheadedness undoubtedly saved lives. Their willingness to put themselves in danger to protect others answered the prayer of Americans watching all across the country.

So heroism like this can come with great sacrifice. Some of the officers here today sustained serious injuries in the line of duty. They were shot or stabbed. Some lost friends, even a partner. Some are still recovering.

There's one person who should be here today, but isn't: Officer Dennis Simmonds of the Boston PD. Last year, Officer Simmonds was injured in an explosion during that gun battle after the Boston Marathon bombing. And just a few weeks ago, he died while on active duty. Dennis's partner, Officer Jean Gerard Jean-Louis, is here. So are members of his family, including his parents Dennis and Roxanne. And our sorrow at your loss is matched only by our gratitude for your son's service and sacrifice. I told the family before I came out here, he will not be forgotten.

So what these officers do is dangerous. They do it because it's important. Maintaining the public safety is the foundation of everything that is good that happens every single day in America. It's why parents can send their kids to school and adults can head off to work and community centers and houses of worship can open their doors to one and all and businesses can start and thrive. And that's why people can cast their votes and express their views without fear. It's one of the reasons people travel and do business in these United States.

And that's why Americans everywhere owe a debt to our Nation's law enforcement. And we have to do our part by making sure all of you

have the resources and protections and support that you need to do your job well. That's our end of the bargain. That's what I'm going to keep on fighting for every day that I have the honor of serving as your President. And that's what Joe Biden is going to work every day as long as he has the honor of serving as your Vice President.

So on behalf of all the American people, thank you. There are people alive today because of you. You may not even know their names, but we do, and we're proud of you.

God bless you. God bless your families, and God bless the United States of America. Please give them a big, big round of applause. Congratulations!

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:39 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dennis R. and Roxanne G. Simmonds, parents of former Boston Police Department officer Dennis O. Simmonds. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden, who introduced the President.

Statement on National Small Business Week
May 12, 2014

Today marks the beginning of National Small Business Week, a time to highlight the crucial role that America's small businesses play in our economy. Employing millions of Americans and creating nearly two out of three new jobs, America's small businesses are the backbone of our economy. More than that, our small businesses represent what is best about America: that with hard work and ingenuity, anyone, no matter their background, can build a better future for themselves and their families.

That's why we have cut taxes for small businesses 18 times and we remain committed to simplifying the Tax Code for small businesses. Additionally, the Small Business Administration continues to support hundreds of thousands of businesses through loans all across the Nation. But there's more work to do, and my administration will continue to do everything we can to help our businesses grow and succeed, including taking steps to invest in our infrastructure, support access to credit to more small businesses, and reform our immigration system. During National Small Business Week, we renew our commitment to helping our businesses hire more workers, sell more products, and continue to grow the foundation of our American economy.

Statement on the Conclusion of National Elections in India
May 12, 2014

I congratulate the people of India on concluding their national elections today. India has set an example for the world in holding the largest democratic election in history, a vibrant demonstration of our shared values of diversity and freedom.

The United States and India have developed a strong friendship and comprehensive partnership over the last two decades, which has made our citizens safer and more prosperous and which has enhanced our ability to work together to solve global challenges. We look forward to the formation of a new Government once election results are announced and to working closely with India's next administration to make the coming years equally transformative.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Yemen
May 12, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13611 of May 16, 2012, with respect to Yemen is to continue in effect beyond May 16, 2014.

The actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Yemen and others continue to threaten Yemen's peace, security, and stability, including by obstructing the implementation of the agreement of November 23, 2011, between the Government of Yemen and those in opposition to it, which provided for a peaceful transition of power that meets the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people for change, and by obstructing the political process in Yemen. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13611 with respect to Yemen.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Conflict in the Central African Republic
May 12, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in and in relation to the Central African Republic.

The United Nations Security Council addressed this situation in Resolutions 2121, 2127, and 2134, and has required that Member States impose certain targeted measures on persons determined to be contributing to the situation. The order strengthens the United States ability to implement these measures.

The order does not target the entire country of the Central African Republic, but rather is intended to target those who threaten the peace, security, or stability of the Central African Republic or who undermine democratic processes or institutions in the Central African Republic. The order blocks the property and interests in property of persons listed in an Annex to the order. The order also provides authority for blocking the property and interests in property of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have engaged in, directly or indirectly, any of the following in or in relation to the Central African Republic:

- actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of the Central African Republic;
- actions or policies that threaten transitional agreements or the political transition process in the Central African Republic;
- actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in the Central African Republic;
- the targeting of women, children, or any civilians through the commission of acts of violence (including killing, maiming, torture, or rape or other sexual violence), abduction, forced displacement, or attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or through conduct that would constitute a serious abuse or violation of human rights or a violation of international humanitarian law;
- the use or recruitment of children by armed groups or armed forces in the context of the conflict in the Central African Republic;
- the obstruction of the delivery or distribution of, or access to, humanitarian assistance;
- attacks against United Nations missions, international security presences, or other peacekeeping operations; or
- support to persons, including armed groups, involved in activities that threaten the peace, security, or stability of the Central African Republic or that undermine democratic processes or institutions in the Central African Republic through the illicit trade in natural resources of the Central African Republic;

- except where intended for the authorized support of humanitarian activities or the authorized use by or support of peacekeeping, international, or government forces, to have directly or indirectly supplied, sold, or transferred to the Central African Republic, or been the recipient in the territory of the Central African Republic of, arms and related materiel, including military aircraft, and equipment, or advice, training, or assistance, including financing and financial assistance, related to military activities;
- to be a leader of (i) an entity, including any armed group, that has, or whose members have, engaged in any of the activities described above or (ii) an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of (i) any of the activities described above or (ii) any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien determined to meet one or more of the above criteria.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and the United Nations Participation Act as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and

Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The letter referred to Executive Order 13667, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. The letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 13.

Remarks on Immigration Reform at a Meeting With Law Enforcement Leaders

May 13, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Have a seat, have a seat. Well, it's wonderful to see all of you. Some of you I've had the chance to get to know working on law enforcement issues and criminal justice issues. But I cannot thank you enough for participating today on an issue that I think is important to our economic future, to our cultural future, to our standing in the world, and to our safety and security, and that's the issue of immigration.

I'm here with some of the leaders of America's law enforcement agencies who recognize that fixing a broken immigration system isn't just the right thing to do, it's also the right thing to do for safety and security in communities all across America.

The immigration system that we have right now makes it harder, not easier, for law enforcement agencies to do their jobs. It makes it harder for law enforcement to know when dangerous people cross our borders. It makes it harder for business owners who play by the rules to compete when they're undercut by those who would exploit workers in a shadow economy. And it makes it harder for law enforcement to do their jobs when large segments of the community are afraid to report crimes or serve as witnesses because they fear the consequences for themselves or their families.

This system is not fair. It's not fair to workers; it's not fair to businesses who are trying to do the right thing; it's not fair to law enforcement agencies that are already stretched thin.

Now, the good news is, the Senate has already passed a bill with a wide, bipartisan majority that would go a long way towards fixing a broken system. It would strengthen our borders even further. And I'm sure Jeh has talked to you about the work that's been done over the last 5 years. We have put unprecedented resources at the borders, and you've seen the results. We have fewer folks coming in than ever before. And the personnel that is arrayed along our borders is well beyond anything that we saw 5 years ago, 10 years ago, 20 years ago. So we take border enforcement seriously.

But what this reform package would also do is create a firm, but fair pathway to earned citizenship for those who live in the shadows, and as a consequence, would give law enforcement a better idea of who's in the country. It would also help build trust between local communities and law enforcement and immigrant communities. It would undermine criminal enterprises that prey on undocumented immigrants. And it would allow law enforcement to focus on its primary mission, which is keeping our communities safe.

And these are some of the reasons why a broad, bipartisan coalition—including law enforcement agencies like the ones who are represented today—is pushing Congress to go ahead and get the job done and get us over the finish line and do it this year.

I hope all of you keep it up because it's making a difference. A number of Republicans are realizing that blocking immigration reform is not an option, and that's the good news. And most Americans—the majority of Americans—know this is the right thing to do. Public opinion is on our side on this. Unfortunately, we've got a handful of House Republicans right now who are blocking going ahead and letting legislation get to the floor.

To their credit, I think Speaker Boehner and some of the other leaders there do believe that immigration reform is the right thing, but they've got to have a political space that allows them to go ahead and get it through their caucus and get it done. I've said to them, if they've

got a—ideas, I'm happy to talk to them. We're not hell bent on making sure that every letter of what's in the Senate bill is exactly what ultimately lands on my desk for signature, but there are some core principles that we've got to get done. We've got to have stronger border security. We've got to make sure that we are dealing with companies that are not doing the right thing by workers. We've got to make sure that we've got an improved legal immigration system, because a lot of folks are getting pushed into the illegal system because the waits are so long through the legal process. And we've got to make sure that there's a way for people to earn some pathway to citizenship.

And keep in mind—some of these statistics you may have already heard—it's estimated that over 80 percent of the folks who are here on an undocumented basis have been here 10 years or longer. These are folks who are woven into the fabrics of our communities. Their kids are going to school with our kids. Most of them are not making trouble; most of them are not causing crimes. And yet we put them in this untenuous position, and it creates a situation in which your personnel, who have got to go after gangbangers and need to be going after violent criminals and deal with the whole range of challenges and who have to cooperate with DHS around our counterterrorism activities, you've got to spend time dealing with somebody who is not causing any other trouble other than the fact that they were trying to make a living for their families. That's just not a good use of our resources. It's not smart. It doesn't make sense.

So I know I'm preaching to the choir here. You wouldn't be here if you didn't agree with us that this is time for us to go ahead and get moving. But I just want all of you to know, your voices, particularly over the next couple of months, are going to be critical. I think people have come to expect that I'm in favor of comprehensive immigration reform. I think that people anticipate that the Congressional Hispanic Caucus is going to be in favor of comprehensive immigration reform. I think people understand that there are a lot of agricultural enterprises that know how important their immigrant workers are to them. But it's more important in some ways to get over the hump when they hear from unexpected voices.

I think the evangelical Christian community has shown itself to be foursquare behind immigration reform, and that's a powerful voice. I think portions of the business community that people may not anticipate know that this is the key to our economic future. It would lower our deficits; it would grow our economy; it would bring in some of the most skilled people around the world. We want them to continue to come here. That's part of our competitive advantage relative to the rest of the world. Our population is not aging the way some other populations are because it's constantly replenished with folks who are go-getters. And hearing from law enforcement is important, and I think it lends this overall effort great credibility.

So I just want to say thank you to all of you. But we've got this narrow window. The closer we get to the midterm elections, the harder it is to get things done around here. Now, I know it's hard to believe that things could get harder to—[*laughter*]—that this place could get a little more dysfunctional. But it's just very hard right before an election. So we've got maybe a window of 2, 3 months to get the ball rolling in the House of Representatives. And your voices are going to be absolutely critical to that effort.

So I just want to say thank you to all of you. And while I'm here, I want to thank you for the wide range of issues that we've had a chance to cooperate with you on. Whether it's dealing with counterterrorism issues and the preparations that ensure that if and when an event happens, that we're prepared and, more importantly, that we're able to prevent such activities from taking place in the first place, or dealing with natural disasters where our first responders are always right there on the scene, day in and day out your teams, your personnel are doing heroic work on behalf of America. And we're very, very grateful for that.

So thank you, everybody. Let's make this happen. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks on Presenting the Medal of Honor to Sergeant Kyle J. White
May 13, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. Please, be seated. Welcome to the White House. It has been said that true courage is "a perfect sensibility of the measure of danger and a mental willingness to incur it." For more than 12 years, with our Nation at war, the men and women of our Armed Forces have known the measure of danger that comes with military service. But year after year, tour after tour, they have displayed a selfless willingness to incur it: by stepping forward, by volunteering, by serving and sacrificing greatly to keep us all safe.

Today, our troops are coming home. By the end of this year, our war in Afghanistan will be over, and we'll welcome home this generation—the 9/11 generation—that has proven itself to be one of America's greatest.

And today we pay tribute to a soldier who embodies the courage of his generation: a young man who was a freshman in high school when the Twin Towers fell and who just 5 years later became an elite paratrooper with the legendary 173d Airborne, the Sky Soldiers. Today we present our Nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, to Sergeant Kyle J. White.

Now, Kyle is the second Sky Soldier to be recognized with the Medal of Honor for service above and beyond the call of duty in Afghanistan. Today he joins Staff Sergeant Salvatore Giunta and a proud brotherhood of previous honorees, members of the Medal of Honor Society, some of whom are with us here today.

We have a lot of VIPs here, but I'd like to acknowledge the most important: Kyle's parents Cheryl and Curt and Kyle's girlfriend Helen. I am told that back home in Bonney Lake, Washington, when Kyle wanted to enlist, at first he had set his sights on the Marines. But his dad Curt is a veteran of the Army, Special Forces. So I'm told there was a difference of opinion—[*laughter*]—and, I suspect, a good family discussion. As Commander in Chief, I cannot take sides in this debate. [*Laughter*] Bottom line is, Kyle joined the Army. And in doing so he carried on his family's proud tradition of service, which found its expression on a November day over 6 years ago.

Across Afghanistan, base commanders were glued to their radios, listening as American forces fought back an ambush in the rugged mountains. One battalion commander remembered that "all of Afghanistan" was listening as a soldier on the ground described what was happening. They knew him by his call sign: Charlie-One-Six-Romeo. We know it was Kyle, who at the time was just 20 years old and only 21 months into his military service.

Earlier that afternoon, Kyle and the 13 members of his team, along with a squad of Afghan soldiers, left an Afghan village after a meeting with elders. The Americans made their way back up a steep hill, single file, along a narrow path, a cliff rising to their right and a slope of rocky shale dropping on their left. They knew not to stop, that they had to keep moving. They were headed into an area known as ambush alley.

And that's when a single shot rang out, then another. And then, an entire canyon erupted, with bullets coming from what seemed like every direction. It was as if, Kyle said, the whole valley "lit up."

The platoon returned fire. Kyle quickly emptied a full magazine, but as he went to load a second, an enemy grenade exploded and knocked him unconscious. He came to with his face pressed against a rock. And as he moved to get up, enemy rounds hit a rock just inches from his head, sending shrapnel and rock shards across his face.

Most of the unit had been forced to slide down the cliff to the valley below. But Kyle saw a teammate, Specialist Kain Schilling, trying to treat his own shattered arm, using a tree as cover, what Kain later called "the smallest tree on Earth." I'm sure that's how it felt. Kyle sprinted through enemy fire to Kain's side and began applying a tourniquet, shielding Kain with his own body as gunfire shredded that tree.

Then Kyle saw another man down, Marine Sergeant Phillip Bocks, in the open, 30 feet be-

hind them, but too injured to reach cover. Kyle remembers thinking: "It's just a matter of time before I'm dead. If that's going to happen, I might as well help someone while I can."

With bullets impacting all around him, Kyle ran to Bocks and began to pull the injured marine to cover. But worried that he'd expose Bocks to more gunfire, Kyle retreated. The enemy rounds followed him. He ran out again, pulling Bocks a little farther. And once more, he retreated to distract the enemy fire. Once more, he went out, over and over thinking to himself, "I'm not going to make it." Kyle could feel the pressure of the rounds going by him. But somehow, miraculously, they never hit him, not once. One of his teammates said it was as if Kyle was moving "faster than a speeding bullet."

And finally, Kyle succeeded in pulling his comrade to cover. Tragically, there on that cliff, Sergeant Bocks succumbed to his wounds. But in his final moments, this American marine surely found some solace in Kyle White, the American soldier who, until the very end, was there by his side.

Now, that other injured soldier, Kain Shilling, was still out there. And he had sustained another injury, this time to his knee. Kyle ran out once more to Kain's side. Kyle ripped off his own belt for a tourniquet and soon got his hands on a working radio. The voice of Charlie-One-Six-Romeo came into base. Crouching behind that lone tree, Kyle began calling in airstrikes to take out enemy positions.

Kyle stayed with Specialist Schilling as night fell. And Kain was too badly injured to move. Kyle was starting to feel the fog of his own concussions set in, but he knew that he was Kain's best chance to get out alive, so Kyle took charge and ordered the Afghan soldiers to form a security perimeter. He called in a medevac and made sure Kain and the other injured were safely on board. And only then did Kyle finally allow himself to be lifted out.

As the helicopter pulled away, Kyle looked out the window, watching the darkness as they pulled away from that single tree on the cliff. "When you're deployed," he later said, "those people become your family. What you really care about is: I want to get this guy to the left and to the right home."

This family was tested that day. Not a single one of them escaped without injury, and six brave Americans gave their lives, their last full measure of devotion. And we remember them today: Sergeant Phillip A. Bocks, Captain Matthew C. Ferrara, Specialist Joseph M. Lancour, Sergeant Jeffery S. Mersman, Corporal Lester G. Roque, and Kyle's best friend, Corporal Sean K.A. Langevin. Some of their families are here today. I'd ask them to please stand so we can recognize their extraordinary sacrifice.

The legacy of these fallen heroes endures in the courage and strength of their unit: 14 men, forever brothers-in-arms. We're proud to welcome those who fought so valiantly that day: Specialist Kain Schilling, the soldier that Kyle saved, and members of the 2d Battalion, Chosen Company of the 173d Airborne Brigade. Would you please stand?

We honor Kyle White for his extraordinary actions on that November day. But his journey from that day to this speaks to the story of his generation. Kyle completed the rest of a 15-month deployment in Afghanistan. He came back home and trained other young paratroopers as they prepared to deploy. When he completed his service, Kyle decided to pursue a different dream, and with the help of the post-9/11 GI bill, he went to college, he graduated and today works for a bank in Charlotte, North Carolina.

When Kyle walks into the office every day, people see a man in a suit headed to work. And that's how it should be: a proud veteran welcomed into his community, contributing his talents and skills to the progress of our Nation. But Kyle will tell you that the transition to civilian life—and dealing with the posttraumatic stress—hasn't always been easy. More than 6 years later, he can still see the images and hear the sounds of that battle. Every day, he wakes up thinking about his battle buddies.

And if you look closely at that man in the suit on his way to work, you'll notice the piece of the war that he carries with him tucked under his shirt sleeve: a stainless steel bracelet around his wrist etched with the names of his

six fallen comrades who will always be with him. "Their sacrifice motivates me," he says, to "be the best [that]* I can be. Everything I do in my life is done to make them proud."

Kyle, members of Chosen Company, you did your duty, and now it's time for America to do ours: after more than a decade of war, to welcome you home with the support and the benefits and opportunities that you've earned. You make us proud, and you motivate all of us to be the best we can be as Americans, as a nation: to uphold our sacred obligations to your generation and all who have faced that "measure of danger" and "the willingness to incur it."

May God bless you, and may your courage inspire and sustain us always. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

With that, I'd like to have the citation read.

[*At this point, Maj. Matthew R. Newell, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citation. The President then presented the medal, assisted by Lt. Col. Michael P. Wagner, USA, Army Aide to the President. Following the presentation, Maj. Gen. Donald L. Rutherford, USA, Army Chief of Chaplains, said a prayer.*]

The President. That concludes the ceremony, but not the celebration. I hear the food here is pretty good. [*Laughter*] And the drinks are free. [*Laughter*] So who gave a big shout on that? I heard somebody. [*Laughter*] The—but I hope all of you enjoy the hospitality of the White House. I hope we all remember once again those who are fallen. We are grateful to the families who are here. And to Kyle and all who serve in America's Armed Forces, we want you to know that we will always be grateful for your extraordinary service to our country.

Thank you very much, everybody. Have a great afternoon.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:44 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Cheryl and Curt White, parents, and Helen Ball, girlfriend, of Sgt. White. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citation.

Remarks at the Washington Irving Boat Club in Tarrytown, New York
May 14, 2014

Hello, New York! It turned out to be a beautiful day. Well, it's wonderful to be here with all of you. Take a seat, take a seat. Relax.

First of all, I want to thank Governor Cuomo for that great introduction and the great job he's doing. I want to thank Mayor Fixell for having me in Tarrytown. Where's the mayor? Where'd he go? There he is, right there. This is a gorgeous part of the world, and I am lucky to be here, and I'm going to be coming back soon; in 2 weeks, I've got the honor of delivering the commencement at West Point just a little bit further up.

But today I'm here, along with our Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx, to talk about one of the best ways to create new jobs and spur our economy, and that is to rebuild America's infrastructure.

It's been about 5½ years since the financial crisis that rocked Wall Street and then ultimately spread to Main Street. Thanks to the grit, the determination of the American people, we've been steadily fighting our way back. In just 4 years, our businesses have now created 9.2 million new jobs. Auto industry that was flatlining is now booming. A manufacturing sector that had lost a third of its jobs back in the nineties is adding jobs for the first time. Troops that were fighting two wars, they're either home or coming home. Rather than creating jobs in other countries, more and more companies are recognizing, it makes good business sense to locate right here in the United

* White House correction.

States of America with outstanding American workers.

So we've made progress, but here's the thing: We could be doing a lot more. We could make the decision easier for businesses to locate here in the United States, here in New York State, if we do a better job rebuilding our roads, rebuilding our bridges, upgrading our ports, unclogging commute times. The alternative is to do nothing and watch businesses go to places that have outstanding infrastructure.

Now, behind me is the old Tappan Zee Bridge, the longest bridge in New York and one of the busiest bridges around. As any commuter will tell you, it is crowded. [*Laughter*] It carries a lot more traffic than when it was built back in 1955. At times, you can see the river through the cracks in the pavement. Now, I'm not an engineer, but I figure, that's not good. [*Laughter*]

But right now, thanks to the efforts of Governor Cuomo, thanks to your outstanding congressional delegation led by Nita Lowey and including Eliot Engel and Sean Patrick Maloney and Jerry Nadler, all of whom are here today—stand up, congressional delegation; we're proud of you—thanks to their outstanding efforts, workers are building a replacement, the first new bridge in New York in 50 years. It's called the New New York Bridge, which is fine as a name, but for your next bridge, you should come up with something a little more fresh. [*Laughter*]

Now, here's the thing—now, this never happens—you are building this bridge ahead of schedule. Three years ago, after Republicans in Congress refused to pass multiple bills that would have put construction workers back to work, I took action on my own to fast-track the permitting process for major projects like this one. Normally, it would have taken 3 to 5 years to permit this bridge; we did it in a year and a half—in a year and a half. That meant we were creating thousands of jobs faster while doing right by workers and tending to the environment. And the Vice President is in Cleveland today at another project that we fast-tracked: a rapid-transit station that will make life easier for a lot of residents there.

So today we're releasing a new plan to apply the same strategy to other major projects all across America. We're announcing 11 more projects to accelerate, to get moving faster, from Boston's South Station to Pensacola Bay Bridge to new light-rail projects north and south of Seattle. We're cutting bureaucratic redtape that stalls good projects from breaking ground. We're launching a new national permitting center to implement these reforms. We are aiming to put every major infrastructure project on a public dashboard so everybody can go online, track our progress, hold us accountable, make sure things are coming in on time, on budget; make sure your taxpayer money is being used well, but also make sure that we're putting folks back to work rebuilding America. That's our goal.

Now, all these steps we can do without Congress. And all these steps mean more good jobs, because nobody was hurt worse than construction workers by the financial crisis. The housing market plummeted, and a lot of guys in hard hats and a lot of gals in hard hats, suddenly, they were off the job. And that's why the Recovery Act back in 2009, 2010 included the most important public works jobs program since the New Deal, jump-starting more than 15,000 construction projects around the country.

Over the past 5 years, American workers have repaired or replaced more than 20,000 bridges, improved more than 350,000 miles of American roads. Four years ago, when we were just starting to clear away the damage from the financial crisis, the unemployment rate for construction workers stood at 20 percent—in fact, it was over 20 percent. Today, we've cut it by more than half.

But we can do better. We can build better, and we have to. We've got ports that aren't ready for the next generation of cargo ships. We've got more than a hundred thousand bridges that are old enough to qualify for Medicare. [*Laughter*] We've got leaky pipes that lose billions of gallons of drinking water every single day, even as we've got a severe drought in much of the West. Nearly half our people don't have access to transit at all. And I don't have to tell you what some of our airports look like.

Building a world-class transportation system is one of the reasons America became an economic superpower in the first place. But over the past 50 years, as a share of our economy, our investment in transportation has shrunk by 50 percent. Think about that. Our investment in transportation has been cut by half.

You know what other countries are doing? European countries now invest twice as much as we do. China invests four times as much as we do in transportation. One study recently found that over time, we've fallen to 19th place when it comes to the quality of our infrastructure—19th place. I don't know about you, but I don't like America being 19th. I don't like America being second. I want us to be first when it comes to infrastructure around the world because businesses are going to come where there's good infrastructure to move businesses, move people, move services.

We shouldn't watch the top-rated airports and seaports or the fastest rail lines or fastest Internet networks get built somewhere else, they need to be built right here in New York, right here in the United States. First-class infrastructure attracts first-class jobs. Business owners don't want a crumbling road or a bridge because then they can't move out their stuff and their workers aren't as productive because it's harder for them to get to work. They want to set up shop where there's high-speed rail and high-speed broadband, high-tech schools, self-healing power grids, new ports, tunnels. That allows them, when they make goods here in America, to move those goods out and sell them all around the world.

Now, unfortunately, helping States and cities fund infrastructure is one of Congress's chief responsibilities. And you've got some outstanding Members here, but let me just talk a little bit about Congress right now. If they don't act by the end of the summer, Federal funding for transportation projects will run out—will run out. There will be no money. The cupboard will be bare. And all told, nearly 700,000 jobs would be at risk over the next year. That's like the population of Tampa and St. Louis combined.

Right now there are more than a hundred thousand active projects paving roads and rebuilding bridges, modernizing our transit systems. States might have to choose which ones to put the brake on. Some States are already starting to slow down work because they're worried Congress won't untangle the gridlock on time. And that's something you should remember every time you see a story about a construction project stopped or machines idled or workers laid off their jobs.

And that's why, earlier this year, in addition to fast-tracking projects, working with Secretary Foxx, I put forward a plan to rebuild our transportation infrastructure in a more responsible way. It would support millions of jobs across America. It would give cities and States and private investors the certainty they need to plan ahead and invest. And it wouldn't add to our deficits because we'd pay for it in part by closing wasteful tax loopholes for companies that are shipping jobs overseas that are in the Tax Code right now and that we could clean out and help pay to put folks back to work rebuilding America.

Now, so far, at least, Republicans who run this Congress seem to have a different priority. Not only have they prevented so far efforts to make sure funding is still in place for what we've already got, but their proposal would actually cut job-creating grant programs that have funded high-priority transportation projects in all 50 States. They'd cut them by about 80 percent. And they can't say it's to save money, because at the very same time, they voted for trillions of dollars in new tax cuts, weighted towards folks at the very top.

So you think about that for a second. Instead of putting more workers back on the job, they'd put those workers' jobs at risk. Instead of breaking ground on new projects that would improve the quality of life for millions of people, they voted to give a massive tax cut to households making more than a million dollars a year. Instead of making investments that grow our economy by growing the middle class, they're still convinced that prosperity trickles down from the very top.

If you want to tell them what you think about that, don't worry, because usually they show up at ribbon cuttings—[*laughter*]—for projects that they refused to fund.

And here is the sad part: Rebuilding America, that shouldn't be a partisan issue. My favorite President happens to have been a Republican, a guy named Abraham Lincoln, in my home State of Illinois. And it was Lincoln who committed to a railroad connecting East to West, even while he was struggling mightily to hold together the North and South. It was a Republican, Dwight Eisenhower, who built the Interstate Highway System. It was Ronald Reagan who said that rebuilding our infrastructure is "an investment in tomorrow that we must make today." Since when are the Republicans in Congress against Ronald Reagan? [*Laughter*]

But that's part of the problem. We've gotten so partisan, everything is becoming political. They're more interested in saying no because they're worried that maybe they'd have to be at a bill signing with me than they are at actually doing a job that they know would be good for America. It's time for folks to stop running around saying what's wrong with America; roll up your sleeves and let's get to work and help America rebuild. That's what we should be doing.

We don't need a can't-do spirit, we need a can-do spirit. That's what Governor Cuomo has, and it sounds like the State legislature was willing to work with him on this. Well, we need Congress to work with us on these issues. It doesn't mean they're going to agree with us on everything. I guarantee you, they will have more than enough to disagree with me about, but let's not fight on something we all know makes sense. After all, we're the people who, in the depths of the Depression, lifted a great bridge in California and laid a great dam down in the Southwest and lifted up rural America. We shrank a sprawling continent when we pounded in that final railroad spike, connected up this amazing country of ours, stretched a network of highways all across America from coast to coast. And then we connected the world with our imaginations and the Internet.

A great nation does these things. A great nation doesn't say, "No, we can't," it says, "Yes, we can."

So the bottom line, Tarrytown, is America doesn't stand still. There is work to be done. There are workers ready to do it, and some of them are here, and they're already on the job doing the work. And we're proud of them. There are people all across this country that are ready and eager to move this country forward.

So I'm going to keep on fighting alongside all of you to make sure that we're doing everything we can to rebuild America, not just rebuild one bridge, but I want us to rebuild every bridge. I don't want us to just rebuild one school, I want us to rebuild every school that needs help. I want us to, most of all, most importantly, rebuild an economy where hard work is valued and responsibility is respected and rewarded and where opportunity is available not just to some, but to every single hard-working American. And that's what I'm fighting for, and I know that's what you care about.

Thank you very much, everybody. Good job, workers. Look forward to seeing this bridge. Thank you very much. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in New York City

May 14, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Well, first of all, to Blair and Cheryl and their kids, thank you so much for opening up this gorgeous home. And to Gary, Josh, and Jamie—just the whole crew—these folks have been with me dating back to when people couldn't pronounce my name. [*Laughter*] So they are early investors, and they've been with me

through thick and thin, and I couldn't be more grateful for the incredible support and friendship that they've provided.

You've got two of the best Senators in the country in this room in Jack Reed and Michael Bennet. These are the folks you actually want in the Senate. They're serious. They work hard. They are work horses rather than show horses. They are thoughtful. They are constantly looking for ways to be bipartisan, but are rock solid when it comes to Democratic principles. And I'm proud to have served with them, and they're great friends. So we're glad they're there.

And Shaun Donovan is one of your own, used to hang out around here a little bit. And Blair is right to acknowledge that in the aftermath of Sandy, when we thought about who was somebody who we had confidence could drive a process to make sure that the Federal, State, and local coordination delivered for the people who had been affected, and that we could rebuild both on the New York side and the Jersey side as effectively as possible and as quickly as possible, Shaun came to mind and, working with Jamie and others, I think has done a terrific job. So thank you for the great job that you've done.

The country is, by most measures, doing much better than when I came into office. And that's demonstrable. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. Now we've created 9.2 million jobs; the unemployment rate has come drastically down. Because of the recovery of the stock market and the housing market, trillions of dollars of wealth have been restored to the American people. We produce more energy than ever before, and we've been able to accomplish that while doubling clean energy and reducing our carbon emissions faster than any other industrialized country.

Our education system has seen significant improvement. We've reduced the dropout rate. Actually, the Latino dropout rate has been cut in half since 2000; college attendance never been higher. Our exports are up, our imports of oil are down, and the deficit has been cut by more than half.

So if you look at the numbers, you'd say not only are we moving in the right direction, but we've actually got better cards than most other countries around the world. And yet what we also know is, despite the momentum that Blair discussed, there's still anxiety around the country, partly because people still feel traumatized by what happened in 2007, 2008. They had a sense of how unstable their situations—how precarious their situations could be. But partly because we've seen a two-decade- to three-decade-long trend where increases in profitability, expansions of markets, increases in corporate profits, rises in the stock market don't translate into higher incomes and higher wages for the ordinary person, at the same time that their costs for sending their kids to college have skyrocketed. Their health care costs, up until—shockingly—the Affordable Care Act was passed, had been skyrocketing. And so folks feel vulnerable. And what they're uncertain of is whether even with the improvement, the next generation is going to do as well or better than they did.

And that's the central issue of our time: Do we continue to build a middle class and generate ladders of opportunity so that anybody who works hard and is willing to take responsibility can succeed?

And the steps we've tried to take in conjunction with the Senate over the last 5 years have advanced that goal. Whether it was expanding Pell grants for disadvantaged kids or making sure that people weren't going bankrupt because they got sick or putting people back to work rebuilding our infrastructure, everything we've done, everything we've pursued has had that in mind: making sure if you work hard you can make it in this country.

And despite the progress we've made, there is so much left to do. And the challenge we've got is very simple: Washington doesn't work. It's not as if we've got no good ideas on policy. We've got tons of them. I've got a drawer full of things that we know would create jobs, help our middle class, boost incomes, make us more competitive. But we have a party on the other side that has been captured by an ideology that says no to everything because they cling to a

rigid theory that the only way to grow the economy is for government to be dismantled and let the market sort things out and folks at the top doing very well will somehow automatically trickle down to everybody else.

And there might have been a time where that was an exaggeration. But now it's not. You can see it in their budgets. You can see it in their opposition to hiking the minimum wage. You can see it in their opposition to funding basic research. You can see it in their position that the only way to cut the deficit is to cut things that the most vulnerable of our population depends on. You can see it in their refusal to rebuild our infrastructure, something that never used to be partisan.

And the only reason we've been able to make some progress and gain some traction is because we've had a Senate in Democratic hands that has shown extraordinary unity, which means that we've at least been able to get our agenda out there and have a debate about the minimum wage and have a debate about increasing funding for basic research and have a debate that says, no, climate change is real, and it is both a challenge and an opportunity we can do something about.

Now, here's the good news, and I'll be happy to talk to you about the details of any one of these policies. The good news is, on every issue that you and I care about, the country is actually on our side. Immigration reform, a majority of the country agrees with us. Raise the minimum wage, a majority of the country agrees with us. Investing in basic research, check. Rebuilding our infrastructure and putting our folks back to work, agree with it. Revamping our Tax Code that we're rewarding companies that are investing here in the United States, they're with us.

There are very few issues, if any, in which the Republican position enjoys the majority public support. But we've got one problem: We have a congenital disease, which is, during midterms, our voters don't show up. That's what it comes down to. That and population distribution and gerrymandering.

I was with de Blasio, I guess, 2 days before the election. We're in Brooklyn, the streets are filled, and everybody is waving. And I go into buy some cheesecake. Some woman comes up and hugs me and kisses me and says: "Oh, my sister just got on the Affordable Care Act, and we love you. What can we do to support you?" And I said, "Move to North Dakota." [*Laughter*] If I could just get about a million excess votes in Brooklyn—[*laughter*]—out to Nebraska, Wyoming, we'd be doing okay. I don't need 80 percent of the vote here. [*Laughter*]

So we've got some structural disadvantages, but we do not vote during midterms. Our voters are younger; they're more likely to be minority; unmarried women. They're folks who can get galvanized and excited during Presidential elections, but we have a tougher time communicating with them during midterms. And that's what we have to break. We have to break that cycle.

I told Michelle in 2012 this was my last campaign. She said, "Hallelujah!" And then I had to go back to her about 6 months ago and say, "Actually, honey, let me amend that." [*Laughter*] "We've got one more campaign." Because if we are going to realize the potential that we have right now, then we've got to perform better during these midterm elections. I have to have partners in Congress. I have to have partners in Congress.

If you care about climate change, I've got to have partners in Congress. I can do some things administratively; we can do more if we've got folks who are serious in Congress. I can do some things administratively on immigration, but I can't make sure that all the incredible talent that is a huge strength for us compared to our competitors over the next two decades—the fact that young people from around the world want to come here and succeed here and strive here—I can't deliver on that without Congress ultimately acting.

I was up at the Tappan Zee Bridge. I can cut permitting times by more than half to get projects up and running. But if we're going to be serious about dealing with all the bridges and all the roads and airports and ports and broadband lines and smart grid that would put us in a competitive position and put people back to work right now and cut our unemployment, I

can't do that unless I've got a Congress that is serious.

So the stakes here are big. And I want people to feel the same sense of urgency about this as they do about a Presidential election. Because ultimately, the elections have never been about me, they've been about, what can we do together? And I cannot do it unless I've got partners like Jack and Michael along with me.

So my main message is one of hope. We've got all the ingredients to make this the American century, just like the last one. To achieve it, though, we've got to make sure our political system works better. And yes, there are all kinds of reforms that we need to do, from campaign finance to how a filibuster works, to going after Republicans hard when their main political agenda when it comes to—or main election strategy is preventing people from voting. We've got to push back on all that stuff. But ultimately, there are enough voters out there to deliver if we can turn them out.

And that's what the DSCC is all about. That's their priority. That's my priority. And I hope it becomes yours as well. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. at the residence of Blair W. and Cheryl Cohen Effron. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Michael F. Bennet, in his capacity as chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; Jaime S. Rubin, former New York State Director, Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force; and Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum Dedication Ceremony in New York City

May 15, 2014

Mayor Bloomberg, Governor Cuomo, honored guests, families of the fallen: In those awful moments after the South Tower was hit, some of the injured huddled in the wreckage of the 78th floor. The fires were spreading. The air was filled with smoke. It was dark, and they could barely see. It seemed as if there was no way out.

And then there came a voice: clear, calm, saying he had found the stairs. A young man in his twenties, strong, emerged from the smoke, and over his nose and his mouth, he wore a red handkerchief.

He called for fire extinguishers to fight back the flames. He tended to the wounded. He led those survivors down the stairs to safety and carried a woman on his shoulders down 17 flights. And then, he went back, back up all those flights, then back down again, bringing more wounded to safety. Until that moment when the tower fell.

They didn't know his name. They didn't know where he came from. But they knew their lives had been saved by the man in the red bandana.

Again, Mayor Bloomberg; distinguished guests; Mayor de Blasio; Governors Christie and Cuomo; and the families and survivors of that day; to all those who responded with such courage: On behalf of Michelle and myself and the American people, it is an honor for us to join in your memories. To recall and to reflect. But above all, to reaffirm the true spirit of 9/11—love, compassion, sacrifice—and to enshrine it forever in the heart of our Nation.

Michelle and I just had the opportunity to join with others on a visit with some of the survivors and families, men and women who inspire us all. And we had a chance to visit some of the exhibits. And I think all who come here will find it to be a profound and moving experience.

I want to express our deep gratitude to everybody who was involved in this great undertaking: for bringing us to this day, for giving us this sacred place of healing and of hope.

Here, at this memorial, this museum, we come together. We stand in the footprints of two mighty towers, graced by the rush of eternal waters. We look into the faces of nearly

3,000 innocent souls, men and women and children of every race, every creed, from every corner of the world. And we can touch their names and hear their voices and glimpse the small items that speak to the beauty of their lives: a wedding ring, a dusty helmet, a shining badge.

Here we tell their story so that generations yet unborn will never forget: of coworkers who led others to safety; passengers who stormed a cockpit; our men and women in uniform who rushed into an inferno; our first responders who charged up those stairs; a generation of servicemembers—our 9/11 generation—who have served with honor in more than a decade of war. A nation that stands tall and united and unafraid, because no act of terror can match the strength or the character of our country. Like the great wall and bedrock that embrace us today, nothing can ever break us; nothing can change who we are as Americans.

On that September morning, Alison Crowther lost her son Welles. Months later, she was reading the newspaper, an article about those final minutes in the towers. Survivors recounted how a young man wearing a red handkerchief had led them to safety. And in that moment, Alison knew. Ever since he was a boy, her son had always carried a red handkerchief. Her son Welles was the man in the red bandana.

Welles was just 24 years old, with a broad smile and a bright future. He worked in the South Tower on the 104th floor. He had a big laugh, a joy of life, and dreams of seeing the world. He worked in finance, but he had also been a volunteer firefighter. And after the planes hit, he put on that bandana and spent his final moments saving others.

Three years ago this month, after our SEALs made sure that justice was done, I came to Ground Zero. And among the families here that day was Alison Crowther. And she told me about Welles and his fearless spirit, and she showed me a handkerchief like the one he wore that morning.

And today, as we saw on our tour, one of his red handkerchiefs is on display in this museum. And from this day forward, all those who come here will have a chance to know the sacrifice of a young man who, like so many, gave his life so others might live.

Those we lost live on in us: in the families who love them still, in the friends who remember them always, and in a nation that will honor them, now and forever.

And today it is my honor to introduce two women forever bound by that day, united in their determination to keep alive the true spirit of 9/11: Welles Crowther's mother Alison and one of those he saved, Ling Young.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. in front of the World Trade Center slurry wall. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City; Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York; Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; Upper Nyack, NY, resident Alison Crowther; and Monmouth County, NJ, resident Ling Young.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma
May 15, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Burma that was declared on May 20, 1997, is to continue in effect beyond May 20, 2014.

The Government of Burma has made significant progress in a number of critical areas, including the release of over 1,100 political prisoners, progress towards a nationwide ceasefire, the legalization of unions, taking steps to improve the country's labor standards, and allowing greater freedom of association and expression. In addition, Burma signed an Additional Protocol to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, a significant step towards supporting the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons.

Despite great strides that Burma has made in its reform effort, the situation in the country continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. The political opening remains nascent, and concerns persist regarding ongoing conflict and human rights abuses in ethnic minority areas, particularly in Rakhine State, and the continued role of the military in the country's political and economic activities. Nonetheless, the United States is committed to supporting and strengthening Burma's reform efforts to ensure that the democratic transition is sustained and irreversible. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Burma.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at Shake Shack Restaurant
May 16, 2014

The President. Let me say something to these folks real quick so we can eat our burgers in peace. And excuse me, my voice is a little hoarse. I had a cold at the beginning of the week. In addition to coming to Shake Shack—which has great burgers and pays its employees over 10 bucks an hour, so we're very proud of them and the great work that they're doing—we've been talking a lot all across the country about the importance of raising the minimum wage. These four individuals just completed a project here in DC, an infrastructure project that put a lot of folks to work, is going to make the economy move better, traffic move better. And as you know, earlier this week, both Joe and I highlighted the fact that we're fast-tracking projects all across the country.

One of the things that we could do right now to put more Americans back to work is to fund our transportation more effectively and more consistently. And if Congress does not act, then by the end of this summer, we could have hundreds of thousands of projects like this all across the country stop, and people whose livelihoods depend on those projects sent home, and businesses that need improved infrastructure suffering under downgraded infrastructure.

So it is a no-brainer for Congress to do what it's supposed to do: Pass transportation funding. We can do it without adding to the deficit simply by getting rid of some corporate tax loopholes that aren't creating jobs and are basically giveaways to folks who don't need them. And when people who—when you ask Americans from all walks of life all across the country what's their number-one priority, it's improving the economy and putting people back to work. And one of the best ways we can do it is to do something about the roads, the bridges, the ports, the airports, the sewer lines all across the country that need repair.

We know we're going to have to do it. This is like deferred maintenance on your house. If you've got to do some tuck-pointing, to fix the roof, or fix the boiler, there's no point in putting it off. Now is the time to do it, and we've got outstanding contractors and workers ready to work. So I hope Congress gets working, and

I'm prepared to work with anybody on a bipartisan basis to get it done.

Vice President Joe Biden. Mr. President, for 40 years, it's been a bipartisan notion.

The President. Right.

Vice President Biden. For 40 years. This is the first time—I've been hanging around and it's like, oh, infrastructure.

The President. This shouldn't be Democrat or Republican, this is American. We've got to rebuild America. And these are folks who are doing it.

So thank you very much, everybody. Enjoy your burgers if you guys are buying them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Meredith C. Upchurch, storm water low impact development team leader, Aidin Rezaei Sarabi, civil engineer, and Abdullahi S. Mohamed, supervisory civil engineer, Infrastructure Project Management Administration of the District of Columbia; and Antonio Byrd, transportation specialist, Transportation Operations Administration of the District of Columbia.

Statement on the 60th Anniversary of the Supreme Court Decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*
May 16, 2014

Tomorrow marks 60 years since the Supreme Court handed down its landmark *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision, the first major step in dismantling the "separate but equal" doctrine that justified Jim Crow. As we commemorate this historic anniversary, we recommit ourselves to the long struggle to stamp out bigotry and racism in all their forms. We reaffirm our belief that all children deserve an education worthy of their promise. And we remember that change did not come overnight, that it took many years and a nationwide movement to fully realize the dream of civil rights for all of God's children. We will never forget the men, women, and children who took extraordinary risks in order to make our country more fair and more free. Today, it falls on us to honor their legacy by taking our place in their march and doing our part to perfect the Union we love.

Statement on International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia
May 16, 2014

Tomorrow, as we commemorate the 10th annual International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, we recommit ourselves to the fundamental belief that all people should be treated equally, that they should have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential, and that no one should face violence or discrimination, no matter who they are or whom they love.

This year, the United States celebrates the 60th anniversary of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, and the 45th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. In doing so, we reflect on lessons learned from our own civil rights struggles and reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that the human rights of all people are universally protected.

At a time when, tragically, we are seeing increased efforts to criminalize or oppress LGBT persons, we call on partners everywhere to join us in defending the equal rights of our LGBT brothers and sisters and in ensuring they are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

The President's Weekly Address
May 17, 2014

Hi, everybody. At a time when our businesses have created 9.2 million new jobs in just over 4 years and more companies are considering bringing jobs back from to foreign countries overseas, we have a choice to make: We can make it easier for businesses to invest in America, or we can make it harder.

I want to work with Congress to create jobs and opportunity for more Americans. But where Congress won't act, I will. And I want to talk about three things we're doing right now.

First, we're helping more businesses bring jobs to America from overseas. Three years ago, my administration created SelectUSA, a team of people in Embassies abroad and agencies here at home focused on insourcing instead of outsourcing. Today, they're helping a Belgian company create jobs in Oklahoma. They're helping a Canadian company create jobs in Kansas. In my State of the Union Address, I asked more businesses to do their part. And this week, business leaders from across the country are coming here to the White House to discuss new investments that will create even more jobs.

Second, on Thursday, I'll be heading to Cooperstown, New York, home of the Baseball Hall of Fame, to talk about tourism. Because believe it or not, tourism is an export. And if we make it easier for more foreign visitors to visit and spend money at America's attractions and unparalleled national parks, that helps local businesses and grows the economy for everyone.

Finally, we know that investing in first-class infrastructure attracts first-class jobs. And I want to spend a minute on this, because it's very important this year.

We know business owners don't seek out crumbling roads and bridges and backed-up supply chains. They set up shop where the newest, fastest, most convenient transportation and communications networks let them invent and sell goods made in America to the rest of the world as fast as possible.

Here's the problem: If Congress doesn't act by the end of this summer, Federal funding for transportation projects will run out. States might have to put some of their projects on hold. In fact, some already are, because they're worried Congress won't clear up its own gridlock. And if Congress fails to act, nearly 700,000 jobs would be at risk over the next year.

That's why I put forward a plan to rebuild our transportation infrastructure in a more responsible way. It would support millions of jobs across the country. And we'd pay for it without adding to the deficit by closing wasteful tax loopholes for companies that ship jobs overseas.

Now, the Republicans in Congress seem to have very different priorities. Not only have they neglected to prevent this funding from running out, their proposal would actually cut by 80 percent a job-creating grant program that has funded high-priority transportation projects in all 50 States. And they can't say it's to save money, because at the very same time, they voted for trillions of dollars in new tax cuts, weighted towards those at the very top.

Think about that. Instead of putting people to work on projects that would grow the economy for everyone, they voted to give a huge tax cut to households making more than a million dollars a year.

So while Congress decides what it's going to do, I'll keep doing what I can on my own. On Wednesday, I was in New York where workers are building the area's first large, new bridge in 50 years. And they're doing it ahead of schedule. Three years ago, I took action without Congress to fast-track the permitting process for major projects. Normally, it would have taken 3 to 5 years to permit that bridge in New York. We did it in a year and a half. And I announced a new plan to cut redtape and speed up the process for even more projects across the country.

All these steps will make it easier for businesses to invest in America and create more

good jobs. All of them can be done without Congress. But we could do a lot more if Congress was willing to help. In the meantime, I'll do whatever I can, not just to make America a better place to do business, but to make sure hard work pays off and opportunity is open to all.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:20 p.m. on May 15 in the Grand Foyer at the White House for broadcast on May 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 16, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 17.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Stabilization of Iraq
May 19, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, is to continue in effect beyond May 22, 2014.

Obstacles to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq, the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in the country, and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Accordingly, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in Potomac, Maryland
May 19, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, first of all, I just want to thank Jeff and Lora for the incredible hospitality and arranging great weather. And it's just nice to be out with some trees and greenery—[*laughter*]—and to be with a whole bunch of good friends.

There are a number of people that I want to acknowledge here today. I'm going to start with Chris Van Hollen. Chris did a lot of work on this race—or on this event. But Chris also happens to be one of the most thoughtful and effective Members of Congress that we've ever seen. And I always like working with Chris Van Hollen, and I think everybody else who knows him does too. So just please give Chris a big round of applause.

On the list of thankless jobs, being chair of the DCCC, I think, ranks right up there. [*Laughter*] Nobody is working harder, more tirelessly and more effectively than Steve Israel. We're glad Steve is here.

We've got the pride of Maryland and one of our most critical leaders on a whole range of issues here as well—Steny Hoyer—thank you, Steny. The outstanding Elijah Cummings is in

the house. The fabulous John Delaney is here. DC's own Eleanor Holmes Norton is in the house. Donna Edwards, who's now engaged, is here. Good job, Donna. I don't know if that was public, but you shouldn't have told me. [*Laughter*] Dutch Ruppersberger is here. Dutch is doing great work on a whole range of issues. And the outstanding John Sarbanes is in the house.

And somebody who—I have said this publicly before, I will say it again—being the Speaker of the House or the Democratic leader of the House caucus is a tough job. And I don't think there's been somebody who's done it more effectively, who's tougher, who is smarter or has more compassion with respect to the people who sent us here than Nancy Pelosi. I want her back as Speaker. I'm very proud of everything that she's done.

Her brother Tommy is here. Tommy is the former mayor of Baltimore. He maintains that he taught Nancy everything she knows, but I don't believe him. [*Laughter*] And Nancy denies it.

But anyway, because we have a fairly intimate setting, I'm not going to speak long because I want the chance to have a conversation with you and ask questions or have you ask questions or give me advice. [*Laughter*] But let me pick up off something Jeff said.

First of all, in 5 years, it will no longer be called Obamacare, because when something is working, they're definitely not going to—there will be a whole renaming process similar to National. [*Laughter*] I don't know if it will be "Reagancare," but it will definitely be—it will be something different.

I'm at the tail end of my fifth year in office, and that gives you some perspective. And so, at times, I think back to what the situation was when I first came into office and the progress that we've made. At a time when we were losing 800,000 jobs a month, we've now created over 9 million new jobs. The unemployment rate is as low as it's been since before the Lehman Brothers crash and the financial crash. We've restored trillions of dollars of wealth to families all across the country: in housing, in 401(k)s.

We produce more energy than we ever have and import less oil than we ever have—or than we have in a very long time—and have doubled clean energy, reduced carbon emissions, doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars.

Our deficits have been cut by more than half. And in part because of the Affordable Care Act, health care inflation has actually gone up at the slowest rate in 50 years. College attendance is higher than it's been in a very long time, and the dropout rate has actually gone down. The Latino dropout rate has been cut in half since the year 2000.

Manufacturing has come roaring back. Not just the auto industry that was on the brink of extinction when I came into office, but manufacturing across the board is starting to pick up for the first time since the 1990s. We're actually adding jobs.

And so when you look at, are you better off now than you were when I came into office? The answer is pretty clear; the answer is yes. Now, despite that, people feel anxious. They feel anxious about their own futures; they feel anxious about their children's futures. And part of it is because what 2007, 2008 taught us is that in this global economy things can happen very fast that cut any kind of sense of stability for a lot of working families. What's also true is, is that the trend lines over the last two decades have rewarded folks at the very top in extraordinary fashion, but the wages and incomes of ordinary folks have barely budged. And so for a country that was built—whose central premise is that if you work hard and you're responsible, you can make it, for too many Americans there remains that sense of maybe that's not true for me, maybe that's not true for my child, maybe that's not true for our future.

And our entire task as a government, regardless of party, should be to focus on, how do we restore for the American people that sense that if I work hard in this country, I can make it; that regardless of where I come from, what I look like, I can make it if I try. And in economic terms, the most important task for us is to restore that sense that the economy grows best when prosperity is broadly shared, when the middle class is growing and there are ladders

into the middle class and a sense of upward mobility and a sense of possibility in people's lives.

Now, we know how to do it. There's some long-term trends that are challenging: globalization, technology. There are some jobs that aren't coming back. But we know right now, if we invest in education—early childhood education, making college more affordable—that will make a difference. We know that we're going to have to transition to a clean energy economy. If we're the ones at the forefront of that, that will position us well for the rest of the century. We know it has to happen.

We know that if we invest in research, then not only can we find cures for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, not only can we find new sources of energy, but we can also create entire new industries. We know it. We know that if we rebuild our infrastructure—we've got $2 trillion worth of deferred maintenance right now that at some point is going to have to be rebuilt. Why not now, when there's still so many folks out of work, and that their ripple effects from rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our ports and our air traffic control systems would allow businesses to move products and employees faster and make sure more dynamic and competitive. We know that.

And we know we can do all this without raising the deficit, because the economy would grow faster and because we've got a tax system that too often rewards folks at the very top who don't need it, when in fact we could have a tax system that's made for a more competitive America.

So the problem is not that we lack solutions, tested solutions, ones that if you polled the average economist they say, yes, that's a good idea. The problem we have is very simple. We've got one party in Congress right now that has been captured by ideologues whose core premise is "no"; who fundamentally believe that the problem is government; who don't believe that we as a community, as a country, have any serious role to play in giving people a hand up; whose budget reflects an interest in cutting back commitments to the most vulnerable and freeing the most powerful from any constraints; and whose principal focus at any given point in the day is trying to figure out how can they make people sufficiently cynical, sufficiently angry, sufficiently suspicious that they can win the next election.

I hate to be blunt about it, but that's the play. And by the way, when I say a party has been captured, it's because I actually want an effective, serious, patriotic, capable, sober-minded Republican Party. And we've had that in the past. I come from the Land of Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln thought infrastructure was a pretty good idea. That's part of why we've got a intercontinental railroad system. Teddy Roosevelt thought conservation was a pretty smart thing. That's why we've got the national parks. Dwight Eisenhower thought it made sense for us to invest in science and education. And that's part of the reason why we produced so many engineers and scientists in the fifties and sixties.

So this is—I constantly try to remind people that what's going on right now is not a debate between traditional Democratic and Republican values. Yes, there are folks who shade more to the conservative side, more to the liberal side. Yes, we can have a legitimate debate about does every Government program work. The answer, by the way, is no. Yes, we could reform Government and streamline it and update it so that it is capable to meet the concerns of the 21st century and it can be more customer friendly. And yes, we do have to worry about issues like long-term debt, although the primary source of long-term debt is health care costs, and if we can help drive those down we'll be just fine.

But that's not the debate that's taking place right now. The debate we're having right now is about, what, Benghazi? Obamacare? And it becomes this endless loop. It's not serious. It's not speaking to the real concerns that people have.

So let me just close by saying this. These midterms are critical. And if you look at where we stand on issues, the public is on our side on almost all of them. That's part of the thing that I know must drive Steve crazy, because he keeps on looking at the polling. Minimum

wage, majority of the people agree with us. Comprehensive immigration reform, people agree with us; they know that immigration is going to help drive this economy forward. Equal pay for equal work, there should be no debate about it.

On issue after issue, people believe what we believe. But what they don't really believe at this point is that government can get anything done. And they've been persuaded in part because of how it's presented that it's the fault of both parties: Democrats are just as unreasonable as Republicans, and that must be why nothing works. Well, you know what, when Nancy Pelosi was Speaker, we got a lot done, and it made a big difference to the people, and it helped folks.

And so if we are to push back against the cynicism that is always good for Republicans—because it means folks don't vote—then we've got to win these midterms. And we've got to be serious about it. We have to have the same sense of urgency that we do when Presidential candidates are at the top of the ballot. We turn out during Presidential elections; we don't in midterms. Our voters do not. And that's why an event like this is so important. We know how to turn folks out. We've got to make sure that we've got the resources to do it.

And I have to close by saying this: Despite the current frustrations when it comes to Washington, we've got the best cards when it comes to our future. There's no other country I would rather be. We've got the best workers, the best universities, the best scientists, the most dynamic economy. We're blessed by this incredible, natural bounty. We have got everything it takes to pass on to our children and our grandchildren, an America that is greater than the one we live in now. But we've got to seize the moment, and to do that, we've got to have a Congress that functions. And to have a Congress that functions, we've got to make sure that Democrats are making progress in this midterm.

So thank you for being here. We've got a lot of work to do.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:18 p.m. at the residence of Jeff and Lora Drezner. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor Thomas J. D'Alessandro III of Baltimore, MD. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Meeting With Business Leaders
May 20, 2014

The President. For the press, I just want to point out these are some outstanding companies, all of whom are investing in the United States, are representing major companies that see the U.S. as a great place to do business. We have made enormous strides over the last several years not just recovering from a great recession, but taking advantage of and now marketing the advantages of doing business in the United States, whether it's low energy costs, an incredibly productive workforce.

Obviously, we have the most dynamic and creative and innovative economy in the world, but we don't always do what it takes to go after business around the world and make sure that they know the benefits of investing in the largest market on Earth. And we want to be more systematic about it. We want to make sure that the Federal Government is working in sync with State and local governments when it comes to locating businesses here in the United States.

SelectUSA turned out to be an enormously successful process, where we're coordinating between agencies as well as other stakeholders. And we want to make sure that it's even more successful the next time. And so this is a terrific venue for us to learn from some outstanding companies. And we're announcing that we'll have our next SelectUSA conference—give me the exact date, Jeff.

National Economic Council Director Jeffrey D. Zients. March of 2015.

The President. March of 2015, which is right around the corner. [*Laughter*]

So thank you for participating. We're very excited about it. Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the United States-Poland Taxation Convention
May 20, 2014

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to its ratification, the Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed on February 13, 2013, at Warsaw (the "proposed Convention"). I also transmit for the information of the Senate the report of the Department of State, which includes an overview of the proposed Convention.

The proposed Convention replaces the existing Convention, signed in 1974, and was negotiated to bring United States-Poland tax treaty relations into closer conformity with current U.S. tax treaty policies. For example, the proposed Convention contains provisions designed to address "treaty shopping," which is the inappropriate use of a tax treaty by residents of a third country, that the existing Convention does not. Concluding the proposed Convention with Poland has been a top priority for the tax treaty program at the Department of the Treasury.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the proposed Convention and give its advice and consent to its ratification.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
May 20, 2014.

Remarks on Veterans Health Care and an Exchange With Reporters
May 21, 2014

The President. Good morning, everybody. I just met with Secretary Shinseki and Rob Nabors, who I've temporarily assigned to work with Secretary Shinseki and the VA. And we focused on two issues: the allegations of misconduct at Veterans Affairs facilities, and our broader mission of caring for our veterans and their families.

As Commander in Chief, I have the honor of standing with our men and women in uniform at every step of their service: from the moment they take their oath to when our troops prepare to deploy, to Afghanistan, where they put their lives on the line for our security, to their bedside, as our wounded warriors fight to recover from terrible injuries. The most searing moments of my Presidency have been going to Walter Reed or Bethesda or Bagram and meeting troops who have left a part of themselves on the battlefield. And their spirit and their determination to recover and often to serve again is always an inspiration.

So these men and women and their families are the best that our country has to offer. They've done their duty, and they ask nothing more than that this country does ours, that we uphold our sacred trust to all who have served.

So when I hear allegations of misconduct—any misconduct, whether it's allegations of VA staff covering up long wait times or cooking the books—I will not stand for it. Not as Commander in Chief, but also not as an American. None of us should. So if these allegations prove to be true, it is dishonorable, it is disgraceful, and I will not tolerate it, period.

Here's what I discussed with Secretary Shinseki this morning. First, anybody found to have manipulated or falsified records at VA facilities

has to be held accountable. The Inspector General at the VA has launched investigations into the Phoenix VA and other facilities. And some individuals have already been put on administrative leave. I know that people are angry and want swift reckoning. I sympathize with that. But we have to let the investigators do their job and get to the bottom of what happened. Our veterans deserve to know the facts. Their families deserve to know the facts. Once we know the facts, I assure you, if there is misconduct, it will be punished.

Second, I want to know the full scope of this problem. And that's why I ordered Secretary Shinseki to investigate. Today he updated me on his review, which is looking not just at the Phoenix facility, but also VA facilities across the Nation. And I expect preliminary results from that review next week.

Third, I've directed Rob Nabors to conduct a broader review of the Veterans Health Administration, the part of the VA that delivers health care to our veterans. And Rob is going to Phoenix today. Keep in mind, though, even if we had not heard reports out of this Phoenix facility or other facilities, we all know that it often takes too long for veterans to get the care that they need. That's not a new development. It's been a problem for decades, and it's been compounded by more than a decade of war.

That's why, when I came into office, I said we would systematically work to fix these problems, and we have been working really hard to address them. My attitude is, for folks who have been fighting on the battlefield, they should not have to fight a bureaucracy at home to get the care that they've earned.

So the presumption has always been, we've got to do better. And Rob's review will be a comprehensive look at the Veterans Health Administration's approach currently to access to care. I want to know what's working. I want to know what is not working. And I want specific recommendations on how VA can up their game. And I expect that full report from Rob next month.

Number four, I said that I expect everyone involved to work with Congress, which has an important oversight role to play. And I welcome Congress as a partner in our efforts not just to address the current controversies, but to make sure we're doing right by our veterans across the board. I served on the Veterans Affairs Committee when I was in the Senate, and it was one of the proudest pieces of business that I did in the legislature. And I know the folks over there care deeply about our veterans.

It is important that our veterans don't become another political football, especially when so many of them are receiving care right now. This is an area where Democrats and Republicans should always be working together.

Which brings me to my final point. Even as we get to the bottom of what happened at Phoenix and other facilities, all of us, whether here in Washington or all across the country, have to stay focused on the larger mission, which is upholding our sacred trust to all of our veterans, bringing the VA system into the 21st century, which is not an easy task.

We have made progress over the last 5 years. We've made historic investments in our veterans. We've boosted VA funding to record levels. And we created consistency through advanced appropriations so that veterans organizations knew their money would be there regardless of political wrangling in Washington.

We made VA benefits available to more than 2 million veterans who did not have it before, delivering disability pay to more Vietnam vets exposed to agent orange, making it easier for veterans with posttraumatic stress and mental health issues and traumatic brain injury to get treatment, and improving care for women veterans.

Because of these steps and the influx of new veterans requiring services, added in many cases to wait times, we launched an all-out war on the disability claims backlog. And in just the past year alone, we've slashed that backlog by half.

Of course, we're not going to let up, because it's still too high. We're going to keep at it until we eliminate the backlog once and for all. Meanwhile, we're also reducing homelessness among our veterans. We're helping veterans and their families—more than a million so

far—pursue their education under the post-9/11 GI bill. We're stepping up our efforts to help our newest veterans get the skills and training to find jobs when they come home. And along with Michelle and Jill Biden and Joining Forces, we've helped hundreds of thousands of veterans find a job. More veterans are finding work, and veterans unemployment, although still way too high, is coming down.

The point is, caring for our veterans is not an issue that popped up in recent weeks. Some of the problems with respect to how veterans are able to access the benefits that they've earned, that's not a new issue. That's an issue that I was working on when I was running for the United States Senate. Taking care of our veterans and their families has been one of the causes of my Presidency, and it is something that all of us have to be involved with and have to be paying attention to.

We ended the war in Iraq. And as our war in Afghanistan ends, and as our newest veterans are coming home, the demands on the VA are going to grow. So we're going to have to redouble our efforts to get it right as a nation. And we have to be honest that there are and will continue to be areas where we've got to do a lot better.

So today I want every veteran to know we are going to fix whatever is wrong. And so long as I have the privilege of serving as Commander in Chief, I'm going to keep on fighting to deliver the care and the benefits and the opportunities that your families deserve, now and for decades to come. That is a commitment to which I feel a sacred duty to maintain.

So with that, I'm going to take two questions. I'm going to take Jim Kuhnhenn at AP, first of all.

Veterans Health Administration System/Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. As you said, this is a cause of your Presidency. You ran on this issue, you mentioned it. Why was it allowed to get to this stage where you actually had potentially 40 veterans who died while waiting for treatment? That's an extreme circumstance. Why could it let—why could it get to that point?

The President. Well, we have to find out, first of all, what exactly happened. And I don't want to get ahead of the IG report or the other investigations that are being done. And I think it is important to recognize that the wait times generally—what the IG indicated so far at least—is the wait times were for folks who may have had chronic conditions, were seeking their next appointment, but may have already received service. It was not necessarily a situation where they were calling for emergency services. And the IG indicated that he did not see a link between the wait and them actually dying.

That does not excuse the fact that the wait times in general are too long in some facilities. And so what we have to do is find out what exactly happened. We have to find out how can we realistically cut some of these wait times. There has been a large influx of new veterans coming in. We've got a population of veterans that is also aging as part of the baby boom population. And we've got to make sure that the scheduling system, the access to the system, that all those things are in sync. There are parts of the VA health care system that have performed well.

And what we've seen is, for example, satisfaction rates in many facilities and with respect to many providers has been high. But what you—what we're seeing is that, in terms of how folks get scheduled, how they get in the system, there are still too many problems. I'm going to get a complete report from it. It is not as a consequence of people not caring about the problem, but there are 85 million appointments scheduled among veterans during the course of a year. That's a lot of appointments. And that means that we've got to have a system that is built in order to be able to take those folks in in a smooth fashion, that they know what to expect, that they—it's reliable, and it means that the VA has got to set standards that it can meet. And if it can't meet them right now, then it's going to have to set realistic goals about how they improve the system overall.

Q. Does the responsibility ultimately rest with General Shinseki?

The President. You know, the responsibility for things always rests ultimately with me, as the President and Commander in Chief. Ric Shinseki has been a great soldier. He himself is a disabled veteran. And nobody cares more about our veterans than Ric Shinseki. So if you ask me, how do I think Ric Shinseki has performed overall, I would say that on homelessness, on the 9/11 GI bill, on working with us to reduce the backlog, across the board he has put his heart and soul into this thing, and he has taken it very seriously.

But I have said to Ric—and I said it to him today—I want to see what the results of these reports are, and there is going to be accountability. And I'm going to expect even before the reports are done that we are seeing significant improvement in terms of how the admissions process takes place in all of our VA health care facilities. So I know he cares about it deeply, and he has been a great public servant and a great warrior on behalf of the United States of America. We're going to work with him to solve the problem, but I am going to make sure that there is accountability throughout the system after I get the full report.

Steve Holland from Reuters.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki/Veterans Health Administration System

Q. Thank you, sir. Has Secretary Shinseki offered to resign? And if he's not to blame, then who is? And were you caught by surprise by these allegations?

The President. Ric Shinseki, I think, serves this country because he cares deeply about veterans and he cares deeply about the mission. And I know that Ric's attitude is, if he does not think he can do a good job on this and if he thinks he has let our veterans down, then I'm sure that he is not going to be interested in continuing to serve. At this stage, Ric is committed to solving the problem and working with us to do it. And I am going to do everything in my power, using the resources of the White House, to help that process of getting to the bottom of what happened and fixing it.

But I'm also going to be waiting to see what the results of all this review process yields. I don't yet know how systemic this is. I don't yet know, are there a lot of other facilities that have been cooking the books? Or is this just an episodic problem? We know that, essentially, the wait times have been a problem for decades in all kinds of circumstances with respect to the VA: getting benefits, getting health care, et cetera. Some facilities do better than others. A couple of years ago, the Veterans Affairs set a goal of 14 days for wait times. What's not yet clear to me is whether enough tools were given to make sure that those goals were actually met.

And I won't know until the full report is put forward as to whether there was enough management follow-up to ensure that those folks on the front lines who were doing scheduling had the capacity to meet those goals; if they were being evaluated for meeting goals that were unrealistic and they couldn't meet, because either there weren't enough doctors or the systems weren't in place or what have you. We need to find out who was responsible for setting up those guidelines. So there are going to be a lot of questions that we have to answer.

In the meantime, what I'd said to Ric today is let's not wait for the report retrospectively to reach out immediately to veterans who are currently waiting for appointments, to make sure that they are getting better service. That's something that we can initiate right now. We don't have to wait to find out if there was misconduct to dig in and make sure that we're upping our game in all of our various facilities.

I do think it is important not just with respect to Ric Shinseki, but with respect to the VA generally, to say that every single day, there are people working in the VA who do outstanding work and put everything they've got into making sure that our veterans get the care, benefits, and services that they need. And so I do want to close by sending a message out there that there are millions of veterans who are getting really good service from the VA, who are getting really good treatment from the VA. I know because I get letters from veterans sometimes asking me to write letters of com-

mendation or praise to a doctor or a nurse or a facility that couldn't have given them better treatment.

And so this is a big system with a lot of really good people in it who care about our veterans deeply. We have seen the improvements on a whole range of issues like homelessness, like starting to clear the backlog up, like making sure that folks who previously weren't even eligible for disability because it was a mental health issue or because it was an agent orange issue are finally able to get those services. I don't want us to lose sight of the fact that there are a lot of folks in the VA who are doing a really good job and working really hard at it. That does not, on the other hand, excuse the possibility that, number one, we weren't just—we were not doing a good enough job in terms of providing access to folks who need an appointment for chronic conditions. Number two, it never excuses the possibility that somebody was trying to manipulate the data in order to look better or make their facility look better.

It is critical to make sure that we have good information in order to make good decisions. I want people on the frontlines, if there's a problem, to tell me or tell Ric Shinseki or tell whoever is their superior that this is a problem. Don't cover up a problem. Do not pretend the problem doesn't exist. If you can't get wait times down to 14 days right now, I want you to let folks up the chain know so that we can solve the problem. Do we need more doctors? Do we need a new system in order to make sure that the scheduling and coordination is more effective and more smooth? Is there more follow-up?

And that's the thing that right now most disturbs me about the report: the possibility that folks intentionally withheld information that would have helped us fix a problem, because there's not a problem out there that's not fixable. It can't always be fixed as quickly as everybody would like, but typically, we can chip away at these problems. We've seen this with the backlog. We've seen it with veterans homelessness. We've seen it with 9/11—the post-9/11 GI bill. Initially, there were problems with it. They got fixed, and now it's operating fairly smoothly. So problems can be fixed, but folks have to let the people that they're reporting to know that there is a problem in order for us to fix it.

Veterans Health Administration System Leadership

Q. What about bonuses for those implicated in mismanagement, Mr. President?

The President. We're going to find out. My attitude is——

Q. Does that upset you?

The President. Listen, if somebody has mismanaged or engaged in misconduct, not only do I not want them getting bonuses, I want them punished. So that's what we're going to, hopefully, find out from the IG report, as well as the audits that are taking place.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Acting Inspector General Richard J. Griffin of the Department of Veterans Affairs; Sharon Helman, Director, and Lance Robinson, Associate Director, Veterans Health Administration facility in Phoenix, AZ; and Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Remarks Honoring the 2014 Super Bowl Champion Seattle Seahawks
May 21, 2014

The President. All right, everybody have a seat. Welcome to the White House. Let's give it up for this quiet, reserved bunch called the Seattle Seahawks. World champions. Best football team in America. I considered letting Sherman up here to the podium today—[*laughter*]—giving him the mike, but we've got to go in a little bit so—[*laughter*].

Obviously, we've got some big Seahawks fans here today. That includes—I know there

are some Members of Congress here who are huge Seahawks fans. We've also got the Secretary of Interior, Sally Jewell, who is a big Seahawks fan. We've got Seattle Mayor Ed Murray in the house, a big Seahawks fan. I want to congratulate Coach Pete Carroll for his outstanding leadership. I think those of us who are in leadership positions across disciplines, we're always looking at folks who do things the right way. I think it's pretty clear that Coach Carroll does things the right way, and we're very proud of him. Seahawks owner Paul Allen, who has done a great job, congratulations to him. We've got General Manager John Schneider, who put together this outstanding organization, but I'm curious where the championship belt is today, John. [*Laughter*]

We are here to celebrate the first Super Bowl victory for the city of Seattle. During the regular season, the Seahawks tied for the best record. Suffocating defense led to—led the league in points allowed, yards allowed, interceptions, takeaways, turnover margin. They beat the rival 49ers—[*applause*]—I knew you guys would clap on that one—[*laughter*]—in the NFC Championship game and then dominated one of the best offenses in the NFL, beating the Broncos by 35 points.

Of course, I don't need to tell you how outstanding the Seahawks are because they did a pretty good job of describing themselves as outstanding during the year. You may have heard about the Legion of Boom—[*laughter*]—Richard Sherman and Earl Thomas and Kam Chancellor and Byron Maxwell, who combined to form the best secondary in football. You had a dominating defensive line with guys like Michael Bennett and Red Bryant, Brandon Mebane—and Brandon Mebane's belly roll dance—[*laughter*]—all combining to—we can't do that here in the White House. [*Laughter*]

There's Super Bowl MVP Malcom Smith. You've got breakout star Percy Harvin. He's not here today, but we've got to give props to "Beast Mode" Marshawn Lynch. I am sorry that Marshawn is not here, because I just wanted to say how much I admire his approach to the press. [*Laughter*] I wanted to get some tips from him. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. It's about the action.

The President. It's about the action. [*Laughter*]

And then there's Russell Wilson, who you may not recognize because his locks are shorn—he has cut his hair. [*Laughter*] Where is Russell?

Quarterback Russell C. Wilson. Right here.

The President. There he is. I was telling him he looks okay this way too. He doesn't have a peanut head or anything, but—[*laughter*].

So Russell has won more games through his first two seasons than any quarterback in history—in history. He also became only the second African American quarterback ever to win a Super Bowl. And the best part about it is, nobody commented on it, which tells you the progress that we've made, although we've got more progress to make.

And part of the reason that I think Russell inspired a lot of folks is, he's been proving the doubters wrong for a very long time. For years, folks said he'd be too short to succeed as a quarterback in the NFL. Five quarterbacks were drafted ahead of him, which is a familiar story for a lot of these Seahawks. You got three starters in the secondary who were taken fifth round or lower. Nineteen players on the roster weren't drafted at all. Last year, a pundit had the gall to call the receiving corps "pedestrian," which I heard made "Angry" Doug Baldwin even angrier. [*Laughter*]

So let me just say as a guy who was elected President named Barack Obama, I root for the underdogs. And so seeing folks overcome the odds excites me. But it also excites me when you see the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. And that's what team is all about. And this is a team.

And it's not just about football. These guys have been overcoming adversity off the field as well. They've got fullback Derrick Coleman, who has been legally deaf since he was 3 years old. I joke about Richard Sherman, but he grew up in Compton amid some wonderful people, but also gangs and drugs and guns. His dad had to wake up before 4 a.m. every day to drive a garbage truck. But because of his dad's hard work and his family and his mom and—Richard ended up earning a 4.2 GPA in high

school, won a scholarship to Stanford. He showed kids from his neighborhood that they could make it. And if he seems a little brash, it's because you've got to have attitude sometimes if you are going to overcome some of this adversity. And the fact that he still goes back to inspire high schoolers for higher goals and making better choices, that's all-star behavior.

And he's not the only one giving back. Russell spends every Tuesday—even during the season—visiting sick kids at the Seattle Children's Hospital. Coach Carroll's A Better Seattle and A Better LA organization works to keep at-risk youth away from drugs and violence. Paul Allen's Family Foundation has given millions of dollars for medical research into traumatic brain injuries, which obviously is a concern in the NFL, but also is a concern to our troops and people all across the country. As a team, the Seahawks raised more than $700,000 this year for causes like supporting our troops and strengthening our schools.

And that spirit of working hard and giving back has endeared this team to its fans in a way that most cities can't replicate. Now, part of it is you all have that stadium that is kind of cheating, because it's so loud. [*Laughter*] You hired some physicist to make it so. [*Laughter*] You know, it was—there are a lot of really smart people at Microsoft and up in those places that can design these things. [*Laughter*]

So we can't talk about the Seahawks without talking about the 12th Man. And—[*applause*]. Last season, "the 12s" set a record not once, but twice, for the loudest crowd noise in history. [*Laughter*] Now, history is a long time, so that's really loud. [*Laughter*] So loud on multiple occasion, they've actually created minor earthquakes, which is disturbing. And you should think about that. [*Laughter*] After the Super Bowl, when they had the chance to celebrate, they let loose in true Seattle style. And while some got a little carried away, there's actually video of a huge group of Seahawks fans interrupting their celebration to wait for the walk sign before crossing an intersection. [*Laughter*] So that's Seattle for you. [*Laughter*]

So congratulations to the 12s, congratulations to the players, the coaches, the staff, the owners. Congratulations to the Seattle Seahawks and the whole city for an outstanding season. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Richard K. Sherman and Byron S. Maxwell, cornerbacks, Earl V. Thomas, free safety, Kameron D. Chancellor, strong safety, Michael Bennett, Jr., and Joseph A. "Red" Bryant, defensive ends, Brandon J. Mebane, defensive tackle, Malcolm X. Smith, linebacker, William P. "Percy" Harvin and Douglas D. Baldwin, wide receivers, and Marshawn T. Lynch, running back, Seattle Seahawks; sports broadcaster and former NFL wide receiver Graduel "Cris" Carter; and Kevin and Beverly Sherman, parents of Mr. Sherman.

Remarks on Signing a Proclamation Establishing the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument

May 21, 2014

Thank you. Well, good afternoon, everybody. As somebody who lives in the neighborhood, I thought I might just drop by and see what all the fuss is about. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Sally for hosting me here today.

And I am thrilled to be with all of you because of your work, not to mention some of the art on the walls reminds me that one of the great blessings of being an American is that we are blessed with some of the most beautiful landscapes and real estate on Earth. I think about the awe that I felt as a little boy the first time I saw the Grand Canyon. I think about the pride that I felt when I took my daughters to see Yellowstone. I think about the memories of what it's like to go on a hike without a security detail behind me. [*Laughter*] It's a wistful feeling. [*Laughter*]

But most of all, I think about our obligations to be good stewards to the next generation, to make sure that our children's children get the same chance to experience all of these natural wonders. So today I'm here to announce that I am using my executive authority to protect more of our pristine landscapes by designating the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks region a national monument. [*Applause*] Good news. Now, I am grateful for the incredible partnership of so many residents of this region, including ranchers and tribal leaders and hunters and many of you here today, especially Senators Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall and former Senator Jeff Bingaman, who were instrumental in helping preserve this treasured landscape. So—[*applause*].

Now, anyone who's ever seen the Organ Mountains that overlook Las Cruces, New Mexico, will tell you that they are a spectacular sight. Secretary Jewell told me as much after her visit there. You got massive rocks that jut up 9,000 feet in the air and stretch for 20 miles, like the organ pipes of a giant. And they're home to many of God's smaller creatures as well: deer and antelope roam; falcons, mountain lions. There are even plant species that don't grow anywhere else in the world.

But it's not just the natural beauty of this region that makes it invaluable to future generations. Its caves and peaks and cliffs bear the marks of millennia of history. From the rock art of some of the first native peoples living on the land to the trail traveled by some of the first overland mail carriers. Some of the most notorious adventures of the Wild West were written in the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks region.

More than 130 years ago, Billy the Kid took cover in the Robledo Mountains and literally left his mark, inscribing his name into what we now know as Outlaw Rock. You can see it today, and I want to make sure that future generations can see it as well. Legend has it that Apache Chief Geronimo hid in these same mountains and staged a miraculous escape from what is now called Geronimo's Cave.

Every year, tens of thousands of Americans visit the region to discover what still remains of these landmarks and to explore what lies along its beautiful trails. Families go on vacation. Tribes return to uphold rich traditions. Archeologists dig for ancient artifacts. Scientists study a thriving environment. And all of it supports the local economy and jobs in the region.

So we're not just preserving history. Outdoor recreation at parks and forests and other public lands brings in tourism dollars, attracting new businesses and encouraging spending at lodgings and food establishments and, of course, park souvenirs. One recent study says that the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks designation alone could double the number of visitors to the area and help grow the local economy by more than 70 percent.

It's impossible to put a price on towering peaks and pristine forests and America's cultural history, but we know that our national parks have an economic impact that extends beyond their boundaries. In 2012, hundreds of millions of recreational visits to public lands and waters generated over $50 billion for local communities and supported nearly 900,000 jobs. So whether they're hiking or camping or fishing, visitors to our parks and public lands are not only enjoying the bounty of our natural resources, but also they're promoting jobs, and they're promoting growth. And continuing to set aside Federal land for outdoor recreation will drive critical revenue for those local communities and preserve our pristine lands for generations to come.

The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument is the second national monument I've designated this year, the 11th overall. I've preserved more than 3 million acres of public lands for future generations. And I am not finished. So—[*applause*].

As I said in my State of the Union Address, I'm searching for more opportunities to preserve Federal lands where communities are speaking up. Because wherever I see an opening to get things done for the American people, I'm going to take it. I've said before: I want to work with anyone in Congress who is ready to get to work and shares those goals. But recently, they haven't gotten the job done.

Congress is sitting on dozens of bills that would help protect our precious land and wildlife. And by one count, there's a set of 10 land conservation bills that have been introduced a combined 52 times over the past 30 years, and they are still stuck. So I'm here to pick up a little bit of the slack. [*Laughter*] Because there is no time to waste to preserve our precious resources and give a shot in the arm to local economies like Las Cruces.

So I want to thank everybody again, not just here on stage, but all of those at the Department of the Interior who worked so hard on this project. And I want to thank all the public servants around the country for everything that you do to guide Americans through God-given wonders and keep our national landscapes pristine, not just today, for—but for many years to come.

Thanks, everybody. And now I'm going to sign this proclamation. All right? Good.

Gather up, everybody. [*Laughter*]. Got to get all the pens in.

[*At this point, the President signed the proclamation.*]

There we go. Done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:25 p.m. at the Department of the Interior. The proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to Chad
May 21, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Approximately 80 U.S. Armed Forces personnel have deployed to Chad as part of the U.S. efforts to locate and support the safe return of over 200 schoolgirls who are reported to have been kidnapped in Nigeria. These personnel will support the operation of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft for missions over northern Nigeria and the surrounding area. The force will remain in Chad until its support in resolving the kidnapping situation is no longer required.

This action has been directed in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York
May 22, 2014

The President. Thank you. There must be some White Sox fans here somewhere. [*Laughter*] It is great to be here in Cooperstown. And I have to say that in addition to just wonderful people, those of you all across America and around the world who have not been here, this is a gorgeous place. We came in by helicopter and had a chance to see the landscape, and it looks like a spectacular place to spend a few days, a week, however long you

want to stay. I'll bet people will be happy to have you.

And I'm—although he is not here yet, I want to acknowledge the Governor of New York. He had a conflict, and he's on his way up. But he is really focused on jobs in Upstate New York: your Governor, Andrew Cuomo. I want to thank your mayor, Jeff Katz, for having me, and his great hospitality, and everybody who was involved in arranging the visit. We've also got, by the way, our Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, Ali Mayorkas, who is here. And he's important because he's helping bring travelers to America.

Now, it is a great honor to be the first sitting President ever to visit the Baseball Hall of Fame. The timing could not be better. First off, summer marks the 70th—75th anniversary of the Hall of Fame. I also promised Frank Thomas I'd check the place out before he's inducted in July. [*Laughter*]

And I'm so glad I did. Obviously, I didn't have a chance to roam around as long as I wanted, but thanks to the wonderful hospitality here, I saw the ball that William Howard Taft threw in the first-ever Presidential opening day pitch. I saw the White House—"White Sox locker" of memorabilia and got to bask in the glory of the 2005 World Series win.

Audience member. Woo!

The President. Yes!

At the Hall's request, I contributed something of my own, which was the jacket I wore when I threw out the first pitch at the 2009 All-Star Game. I hear that with all the media attention about it, there was also some interest in the jeans I wore that night. [*Laughter*] But Michelle retired those jeans quite a while back. [*Laughter*]

So I love baseball; America loves baseball. It continues to be our national pastime. And for any baseball fan out there, you've got to make a trip here. But as much as I'd love to talk baseball all day—and with a Chicago legend, Andre Dawson, the "Hawk," here today, it's hard not to want to talk baseball all day long—I'm actually here to talk about jobs: good, middle class jobs. And believe it or not, places like this institution, the Hall of Fame, have something to do with jobs and economic growth.

It's been about 5½ years since the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes hit. And thanks to the grit and determination of the American people, we've been steadily fighting our way back. Over the last 4 years, our businesses have created 9.2 million new jobs. We had an auto industry that was flatlining; it's come roaring back. A manufacturing sector that had lost about one-third of its jobs in the last decade is now adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. And rather than create jobs in other countries, more and more companies are recognizing that it makes sense to invest right here in America. We've got great workers. We've got the largest market in the world. We've got a whole bunch of stuff going for us, and we're starting to see insourcing rather than outsourcing of jobs.

So we've made progress, but here's the thing: Too many Americans out there are still working harder than ever and can't seem to get ahead. And so we have to do more to spur growth and economic development and create more jobs that pay a good wage.

We should be making it easier, not harder, for businesses to invest and create jobs here in the United States. We should be making sure that people are rewarded for hard work and responsibility, rather than see their wages and salaries stagnate. And we should be making it easier, not harder, for striving young students to afford the higher education that's going to be the key to a lot of 21st-century jobs and make sure that they can repay all that loan debt that too often they're taking on when they go to college.

There's a new bill, by the way, being introduced in Congress in the coming weeks that's going to really do more to make sure that college students are getting a fair shot. Of course, unfortunately, we've got a Congress that all too often spends a few days a week blocking initiatives to create jobs and raise wages and help young people go to college. They seem to be more interested in politics right now than performance. And that's a challenge.

I'll work with anybody who's focused on what we need to be focused on and what all the people who sent us to Washington are focused

on, and that is: How do we improve the economy and create more jobs? But if Congress isn't going to act, then I'm going to do whatever and any steps I can take to create jobs and opportunity for more working families.

So far, we've seen, for example, the House Republicans blocked legislation that would raise America's minimum wage. So I've been working with States and cities and businesses to go ahead and raise their minimum wage anyway. And I issued an Executive order making sure that if you are contracting with the Federal Government, you've got to pay your workers a higher minimum wage—at least $10.10 an hour—because I believe that if you work full time, you shouldn't be in poverty.

We saw Senate Republicans block an up-or-down vote on ensuring equal pay for women. I went ahead and took action on my own to make it easier for women to find out whether they're being treated fairly on the workplace—at the workplace and to be able to take action.

And when it comes to creating jobs, last week I was down in Tarrytown, where workers were able to break ground on the replacement of the Tappan Zee Bridge ahead of schedule because my administration fast-tracked that project and a lot of major projects across the country. On Tuesday, I met with CEOs from around the world who are investing and hiring in America because we've made our country more competitive.

And today I'm here in Cooperstown to talk about some new steps that will lead to more tourism not just within America, but getting more folks to come and visit the treasures, the national treasures that we have all across this country, including the Baseball Hall of Fame right here in Cooperstown. Because tourism translates into jobs, and it translates into economic growth. When visitors come here, they don't just check out the Hall. They rent cars. They stay in hotels. They eat at restaurants. And that means, for Upstate New York, the Baseball Hall of Fame is a powerful economic engine.

Last year alone, travel and tourism were responsible for $1.5 trillion in economic activity across the country. Think about that: $1.5 trillion supporting nearly 8 million jobs in communities like this one. And when tourists come from other countries and spend money here, that's actually considered a type of export. We don't always think about it that way, but we should. Nothing says "Made in America" better than the Empire State Building or the Hoover Dam. Folks who work at restaurants and hotels that serve fans in Cooperstown have the kinds of jobs that can't be offshored. And obviously, it's tough to ship the Rocky Mountains or the Grand Canyon overseas. You can't do it. [*Laughter*]

When it comes to tourism, the good news is, we've got a great product to sell. People want to come here. I was reminded of that yesterday. I took a walk from the White House to the Department of Interior building. Keep in mind, I don't get a chance to take walks very often. [*Laughter*] Secret Service gets a little stressed. But every once in a while, I'm able to sneak off. The—I'm sort of like the circus bear that kind of breaks the chain, and I start taking off, and everybody starts whispering, the bear is loose! [*Laughter*]

So I got out, take a walk. It was a beautiful day. And even though I went for several blocks—it was probably about a 10-minute walk—in that little span of time, I met tourists from Germany and Israel and Brazil and China and Ukraine on the National Mall. The fact that people come from all over the world to see our parks, to see our monuments, is something we should take great pride in as Americans. And it's good for our economy.

So just like we're helping our businesses to sell more goods made in America in markets all across the world, we're spending a lot of time and focus trying to make it easier for folks from around the world to come see America and spend money here. Four years ago, I signed a law that set up a nonprofit organization with one mission, and that is to pitch America as a travel destination. And 2 years ago, I went down to Disney World to announce new action to make it simpler for travelers to visit America, without compromising security at our borders.

And those efforts are paying off. Since its low point after the recession, our travel and

tourism industry has added nearly 580,000 new jobs. Last year, a record 70 million tourists visited America from other countries, more than the populations of Texas, Florida, and New York combined. And they spent their money here. No country on Earth earns more money from international tourism than we do. And the growth of international tourism created about 175,000 new jobs over the last 5 years and helped drive America's exports to an all-time high.

So we're making great strides in welcoming more visitors to America in places like Cooperstown, but we can do even better. I want to turn the 70 million tourists that came last year into a hundred million each year by the beginning of the next decade. And meeting that goal is going to help create jobs here in New York.

And that's why, earlier today, I took new actions to meet that goal. I met with several CEOs of travel and tourism companies, and building on the progress that we've made, I've directed my administration to work with airports, airlines, hotel groups, States, and cities to do more to improve the traveler experience, and reduce wait times for folks entering into the United States, all without compromising our security.

And we have some folks here today who are already showing us what's possible. Scott Donohue is the CEO of the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. Where's Scott? There he is, right here. We've got, from my own hometown, Rosie Andolino, the Aviation Commissioner from Chicago. They're—Rosie is right there. The two of them are responsible for two of the busiest airports in America. But the average wait times through customs and passport control at DFW and O'Hare has fallen to just 15 minutes. You get off your plane, it takes you 15 minutes to get through if you're an international traveler. And that is a big deal. If folks spend less time at the airport, they're more likely to come back for a return trip. And when they go back home, they tell their friends, you know what, America was there to greet us.

And I've made clear that national security remains our top priority; that's not going to change. But there's no reason we can't replicate the success stories of places like Dallas and Chicago all around the country. We can automate passport controls. We can bring in top talent from the private sector to find best practices to help move lines faster. We can add new staff at customs. We want to bring in more visitors faster, more jobs faster. If they come into JFK faster, they come into La Guardia faster, then they can get to Cooperstown faster. And they can start seeing Joe DiMaggio's glove faster. And they can see Babe Ruth's bat faster.

So creating good jobs isn't always easy. But standing here and looking back on more than 150 years of our country's history—and baseball describes our history in so many ways—we're reminded of all the obstacles that we've overcome to get there. This Hall has memories of two world wars that we fought and won. It has memories of color barriers being broken: Jackie Robinson's uniform, the record of his first season as a Dodger. It shows us the history of communities that we built across a new continent and the ways that we connected with our country and our world and how women athletes started getting the recognition that they deserved.

So we've faced challenges before, but we don't respond with cynicism, and we can't respond with gridlock. Every generation faces tough times. But in the words of the great Yogi Berra, they're just "déjà vu all over again." [*Laughter*]

We know we are up to these challenges. And just as our parents and our grandparents faced challenges a lot tougher than the ones we face, and just as they went ahead and built an economy where hard work was rewarded and responsibility was rewarded and opportunity was open to all people, we can do the same. They passed those values on down through the generations. They passed them down to us. And when you come to the Baseball Hall of Fame, part of what you're learning is that there is some eternal, timeless values of grit and determination and hard work and community and not giving up and working hard. Those are American values, just like baseball.

And there's no reason we can't do the same. That's what I'm going to be working on as long as

I'm President of the United States. I'm going to be fighting to make sure that those values live out in better jobs, higher wages, stronger economy, stronger communities. And I hope you'll join me.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to National Baseball Hall of Fame inductees Frank E. Thomas (2014), Andre N. Dawson (2010), and Lawrence P. "Yogi" Berra (1972).

Memorandum Establishing a National Goal and Developing Airport Specific Action Plans To Enhance the Entry Process for International Travelers to the United States

May 22, 2014

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Establishing a National Goal and Developing Airport Specific Action Plans to Enhance the Entry Process for International Travelers to the United States

The U.S. travel and tourism sector is critical to the Nation's prosperity and drives economic growth. In 2013, international visitors alone supported more than 1.3 million U.S. jobs.

Executive Order 13597 of January 19, 2012 (Establishing Visa and Foreign Visitor Processing Goals and the Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness), mobilized the Federal Government to increase visa processing capacity, expand the Visa Waiver Program, and expand expedited traveler programs, all without compromising national security requirements.

The National Travel and Tourism Strategy, published 2 years ago, set a target of attracting and welcoming 100 million visitors by 2021, which the United States is on track to meet. To ensure we properly welcome and process those visitors at our airports, I am directing the Secretaries of Commerce and Homeland Security (Secretaries) to develop a national goal for improving service levels for international arrivals, including the time passengers spend waiting for primary inspection, i.e. passport control, and other steps of the arrival process. The Secretaries shall also develop airport-specific action plans that include actions from both private and public sectors to measurably improve the entry experience and reduce the wait time for international arrivals to those airports. The goal and action plans shall be consistent with efforts that have already demonstrated significant improvements through partnership between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and international airports, such as improvements at Dallas-Fort Worth and Chicago O'Hare over a 12-month period that have resulted in average wait times of just 15 minutes and reduced the percentage of travelers with more than 30-minute wait times from 29 percent to 14 percent.

The purpose of this goal and action plans is to maximize the economic contribution of travel and tourism for business, leisure, academic, medical, and other lawful purposes by improving the experience of international travelers coming to the United States, in particular their experience with passport control and customs processing at airports in the United States.

The experience of an international arrival at one of our airports is not limited to the interaction with the U.S. Government. Airports, airlines, and local governments figure heavily into the arrival's experience—and they have an essential role to play in creating a positive first impression. Therefore, as part of the action plans, the Secretaries will identify opportunities for private and nonfederal public sector actors to help achieve the goal, and ask for their public commitment to take specific actions to improve the entry experience for international guests.

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to remove

barriers to traveler entry while continuing to protect our national security, public health, and safety, I hereby direct as follows:

Section 1. National Goal for Improving the Entry Process for International Arrivals. (a) Within 120 days of the date of this memorandum, the Secretaries shall, in consultation with the Tourism Policy Council established by the United States National Tourism Organization Act of 1996, National Security Council, National Economic Council, Council of Economic Advisers, Office of Management and Budget, Secretaries of State, Agriculture, Transportation, and Health and Human Services, and other executive departments and agencies (agencies) as appropriate, develop the following:

(i) in consultation with private and nonfederal public actors, a national goal for improving the experience of international arriving passengers, including expediting the arrival and entry process for international visitors to the United States. In developing the goal, the Secretaries shall consider all steps the Federal Government can take to improve the arrivals experience, including by expediting primary inspection and customs clearance, while maintaining public health and national security. In addition to steps to be taken by agencies, the Secretaries shall identify opportunities for both private and nonfederal public sector actors to help achieve the goal; and

(ii) in consultation with airlines, airport authorities, worker representatives, State and local governments, and appropriate private and nonfederal public actors, airport-specific action plans to measurably improve the international arrivals' experience and reduce the processing time for international arrivals in at least 15 U.S. gateway airports. The action plans shall draw upon the lessons and successes of the targeted pilot efforts that demonstrated significant service level improvements and wait time reductions at Dallas-Fort Worth and Chicago O'Hare airports. These action plans could include automating paper Customs and Border Protection Form I–94, implementing Automated Passport Control kiosks, expanding the DHS Global Entry program, and airports entering into voluntary partnerships with stakeholders to provide increased services on a reimbursable basis.

(b) In developing the goal and action plans as set forth in subsection (a) of this section, the Secretaries shall establish metrics for measuring progress in implementing the action plans and achieving service-level improvements, taking into account the Federal Government's responsibility to protect the safety, public health, and national security of the United States and its visitors. These metrics shall include measurements of wait times that consider the entire arrivals process (from landing to exiting the airport), private sector effects on the arrivals process, and traveler perceptions of their experience.

(c) In developing the goal and action plans, the Secretaries shall consult with existing nongovernmental entities and advisory councils with relevant expertise and experience, such as the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board within the Department of Commerce, for continued input and advice.

Sec. 2. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department, agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law, and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

(d) Independent agencies are strongly encouraged to comply with the requirements of this memorandum.

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Reception in Chicago, Illinois

May 22, 2014

Hello, hello, hello! Hello, everybody. Well, it's good to be in Chicago. Good to be home, now that it's warmed up. [*Laughter*] It was a rough winter. But, you guys, you look like you survived it, you're not any worse for wear.

Let me begin by thanking Michael and Tanya. I did not know what a significant role I played in—[*laughter*]—making sure that this thing worked out. I was wondering, how did Michael get such a beautiful woman? And now I realize, he was basically dropping my name—[*laughter*]—and said, yes, the President is my great buddy and—[*laughter*]—and so now I know, now I understand. But thank you so much to both of you for hosting us in your beautiful home.

And I also want to acknowledge two people who are doing great work every single day. One of the best public servants we have is the Senator from the great State of Colorado, who is here and also heads up the Democratic Committee to make sure that we hang on to the Senate, Michael Bennet is in the house. So give Michael a big round of applause. Yay, Michael!

And of course, part of the reason we're here is because we have somebody who not only has always been fighting the good fight on behalf of working families here in Illinois and across the country, but also happens to be somebody who, when I first went to the Senate, taught me so much and has been such a great and loyal friend. He is somebody whose integrity shines through on everything he does. So please give a big round of applause to our own Dick Durbin. Dick Durbin. Dick Durbin.

Now, I'm looking around and I see a lot of friends, and all of you look the same, and I look like Morgan Freeman. [*Laughter*] So the job has been wearing me down a little bit, I admit, gray hair and all that. But Michelle still thinks I'm cute. She's not ready to trade me in yet. [*Laughter*] But whenever I come to Chicago and I see great friends, it reminds me of why I got into politics, because a lot of people here played a role in me becoming a State senator, becoming a U.S. Senator and ultimately becoming President.

I know that the Manilows are here, for example. They hosted something for me when nobody knew me. And they're just one of many people here who have tracked my career. And the values I carried with me to the White House are the values that so many of you taught me.

Michael talked about his American Dream, and let's face it, not everybody achieves that dream to the same degree that Michael does. But the basic impulse of coming here and thinking that this is a land of opportunity and if I work hard and I've got good ideas and I take responsibility, then I can make it, regardless of where I'm from, what my last name is, what God I worship—that's the essence of who we are. That's the essence of Chicago. That's the essence of America.

And when I first came into office, obviously, we were in the midst of the worst recession since the Great Depression, losing 800,000 jobs a month. Over the last 4 years, we've created 9.5 million jobs. The unemployment rate has come down, and housing has recovered. The auto industry has come back. The deficits have been cut in half. We have dug our way out of the rubble of that crisis.

The challenge we have, though, is that for too many families around the country, that recovery has not translated into higher incomes or higher wages. We're still having trouble making sure that they can finance a child's college education. We're still trying to figure out, how am I going to retire. There are still too many people out of work, and there are too many folks who are working full time, but at the end of the month, have a tough time paying the bills. We still have challenges making sure that every child in America is getting a first-class education. And we still have challenges with an immigration system that is broken and depriving us of enormous talent, one of our greatest strengths as a country. Climate change remains a generational challenge that we've got to tackle boldly. And unfortunately, we've got a Congress that right now just can't seem to get anything done.

Now, you'll hear if you watch the nightly news or you read the newspapers that, well, there's gridlock, Congress is broken, approval ratings for Congress are terrible. And there's a tendency to say, a plague on both your houses. But the truth of the matter is that the problem in Congress is very specific. We have a group of folks in the Republican Party who have taken over who are so ideologically rigid; who are so committed to an economic theory that says if folks at the top do very well, then everybody else is somehow going to do well; who deny the science of climate change; who don't think making investments in early childhood education makes sense; who have repeatedly blocked raising a minimum wage so if you work full time in this country, you're not living in poverty; who scoff at the notion that we might have a problem with women not getting paid for doing the same work that men are doing.

They, so far, at least, have refused to budge on bipartisan legislation to fix our immigration system, despite the fact that every economist who's looked at it says it's going to improve our economy, cut our deficits, help spawn entrepreneurship, and alleviate great pain from millions of families all across the country.

So the problem is not Dick Durbin. The problem is not Michael Bennet. The problem is not that the Democrats are overly ideological, because the truth of the matter is, is that the Democrats in Congress have consistently been willing to compromise and reach out to the other side. There are no radical proposals coming out from the left. When we talk about climate change, we talk about how do we incentivize through the market greater investment in clean energy. When we talk about immigration reform there's no wild-eyed romanticism. We say we're going to be tough on the borders, but let's also make sure that the system works to allow families to stay together, and that we're attracting talent like Michael who constantly replenish the American Dream.

When we talk about taxes, we don't say we're going to have rates in the 70 percent or 90 percent when it comes to income like existed here 50, 60 years ago. We say let's just make sure that those of us who have been incredibly blessed by this country are giving back to kids so that they're getting a good start in life, so that they get early childhood education, so that struggling middle class families are able to finance their education, and that if a talented young person wants to go into teaching or wants to become a social worker, that they're not burdened by hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of debt.

Health care: We didn't suddenly impose some wild, crazy system. All we said was let's make sure everybody has insurance. And this made the other side go nuts, the simple idea that in the wealthiest nation on Earth, nobody should go bankrupt because somebody in their family gets sick, working within a private system.

So when you hear a false equivalence that somehow, well, Congress is just broken, it's not true. What's broken right now is a Republican Party that repeatedly says no to proven, time-tested strategies to grow the economy, create more jobs, ensure fairness, open up opportunity to all people.

Which leads me to the reason we are here tonight: I need a Congress that works. And that means I need a Democratic Senate. And it would be helpful to have a Democratic House.

Now, you all know this so I'm preaching to the choir. But here's the challenge we have: Democrats are not perfect, and it turns out, one of our great imperfections is, we have a congenital tendency not to vote in midterm elections.

I don't know what it is. Presidential elections, we're all in. In 2008, you all went crazy; 2012, you still went crazy. High turnout, we're motivated, donors are involved, people are active, folks are knocking on doors, people making phone calls. And then the midterm comes, and we fall asleep.

That cannot happen in this election because the stakes are too high. And I say this mindful that in every election somebody says how high the stakes are. But think about what's at stake right now. Think about it. If we do not hang on to the Senate and make gains in the House we may not get immigration reform done, which means we could have another 3, 4 years in which we're being deprived of talent we're training here in the United States; they go back home and start businesses someplace else. There are Michael Polskys right now in universities that have the possibility of creating businesses here, but may end up going back home because we have a broken immigration system. That's what's at stake.

Basic research: We're on the cusp of discovering—when it comes to brain research, we've invested in a BRAIN Initiative that could discover cures for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, debilitating diseases, and as our population ages, it's going to be more and more important. And yet if you look at the Republican House budget, it slashes the very research that promises to provide cures to families all across America and could potentially create entire new industries in this country.

Energy: We've doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars, doubled the production of clean energy. Solar has gone up three times since I came into office, new generation of wind power 10 times. We're making enormous progress. But if we don't have a Congress that has that same vision that we should be out in front, ahead, when it comes to the race for 21st-century energy sources, then we're going to be stuck doing the same thing we've been doing forever. And that means that we cannot stop the trends towards higher emissions and higher greenhouse gases and global warming.

And I know it's hard to talk about global warming here in Chicago—[*laughter*]—after this winter. But everybody here understands that it's changing weather patterns that are at stake here, with potentially devastating, catastrophic consequences.

Minimum wage, equal pay for equal work, the Supreme Court—all these issues are at stake in the midterms, not in the Presidential election. You have a President who is fighting for you in the White House. What you do not have right now is a Congress that can function.

And I want to make clear, by the way, because I'm in the Land of Lincoln: The problem is not the Republican Party, per se. I want a functioning, coherent, reasoned-based Republican Party. And if they've got slightly different ideas than mine, I am happy to sit down and work them out. I'm talking about a very specific faction of the Republican Party that's taken over and cannot get anything done.

Harry Truman used to talk about the "do-nothing" Congress. This Congress has done less than the "do-nothing" Congress that Harry Truman talked about. I'm serious.

So the bottom line is, we have to feel a sense of urgency in this election. And that means that every one of you, many of whom are great supporters and have backed me for a long time and are happy to come to Michael and Tanya's house and participate, it means I need you to push a little further than you're doing right now. I'm going to need you to help to activate and mobilize folks throughout this town and your contacts across the country to say it is not good enough simply to sit back and complain. Cynicism is not an option. Cynicism is not wisdom.

I've now been President for a little over 5 years; I've got 2½ years to go. I will make every moment count. It has been the great privilege of my life. But it's interesting, the longer I'm in this job the more I feel as if we get one moment, one life to really make a difference on behalf of Malia and Sasha and Michael and Tanya's kids and all of our kids and grandkids.

And the time goes by really quick. And if we fritter away opportunities on stuff that we know is right, that we know is right—if we don't fight for it, understanding that there are going to be times where we have setbacks and progress is never smooth—if we're not willing to really dig down and make things happen at this moment, then they don't happen.

So I don't take my job for granted. But I hope you don't take for granted the opportunities that brought Michael to these shores and allowed him to succeed. We have to fight for that stuff. And we're on the right side on every single issue and the majority of the American people agree with us on every single issue. But we've got to make sure those folks go out to vote. We've got to make sure we get our message out. And the only way we do that is if all of you are active and involved in this election. Don't wait till 2016. I need you to be active in this election.

I've run my last campaign. But I'm going to be working just as hard in this one as I was in 2008 and 2012, because my goal in running for President was never simply to have the title. My goal was to get something done. And I cannot do it alone.

So I want to thank all of you for everything you've done for me, but I'm asking you, I need you to it for a Democratic Senate and a Democratic House. And if you feel that same sense of urgency, we're going to continue to make change not just through my Presidency, but for years to come.

Thank you so much, everybody. God bless you, God bless America, and God bless Chicago!

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:54 p.m. at the residence of Michael and Tanya Polsky. In his remarks, he referred to actor Morgan Freeman; attorney, real estate developer, and philanthropist Lewis Manilow and his wife Susan; and Alan and Gabriel Polsky, children of Mr. and Mrs. Polsky. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in Chicago

May 22, 2014

The President. First of all, to Fred and Dan, I'm so grateful for you guys hosting us here today. I'm trying to remember, was it 2 years ago or 3 years ago that I was here?

Audience member. Two years ago. And you were here in——

The President. Well, I've been here a lot, I know. [*Laughter*] I meant most recently. I have abused Fred's hospitality for quite some time. But it is wonderful to be home now that is has warmed up. [*Laughter*] And it is wonderful to be with a lot of old friends.

There are a couple other people I just want to acknowledge real quickly. Obviously, our Governor, Pat Quinn, is in the house. Please give him a big round of applause. Pat is doing a lot of hard stuff, and he's doing it the right way. And I'm very appreciative for all the efforts that he's making down in Springfield.

We also have two of our finest public servants in the country. The first has the thankless job of being the chair of the Democratic senatorial reelection committee, and that is our outstanding Senator from Colorado, Michael Bennet. And the second guy is the person who, upon my election to the United States Senate, essentially taught me everything that he knew and kept me out of trouble and supported me every step of the way when I ran for President and has been a great friend and champion on behalf of working families not just in Illinois, but all across the country. He is a great friend. I couldn't be prouder to be associated with him: Dick Durbin.

So the goal here is not for me to give a long speech, because I want to have a conversation with you, but let me just set the context. A little over 5 years since I've been elected. We've gone from losing 800,000 jobs a month to cre-

ating over 9 million jobs. The unemployment rate has come down. The housing value has come up. The stock market, gone up. Trillions of dollars of wealth restored for families all across the country. The deficit—you wouldn't know it always from reading the newspapers—has been cut by more than half.

Clean energy, we've doubled. Greenhouse gases, we've lowered. Exports, we're on track to double. College enrollment hitting alltime peaks. High school dropout rates going down. Latino dropout rates cut in half since 2000.

We've ended two wars. We are—or we've ended one war, and we're in the process of ending the second. We're producing more energy than we ever have before, and we're importing less foreign oil than we have in close to two decades.

So there are a whole bunch of metrics, a whole bunch of measures by which you'd say, indisputably, that we are better off now than we were when I came into office. And a lot of that has to do with the incredible resilience and grit and hard work of the American people. And yet there's still anxiety all across America. And some of it is that people still feel the trauma of seeing their home values drop or their 401(k)s plunge or losing their job or seeing a friend of theirs lose their home. And you don't shake those things off right away. It feels as if the ground is less firm under your feet.

But a lot of it has to do with the fact that we've got trends that have continued over the course of decades in which those of us, frankly, in this room continue to do better and better. Folks at the top have seen their incomes and their wealth soar. And ordinary Americans have seen their wages and incomes flatline at the same time as the costs of everything has gone up. And so they're less confident that not only they will be able to retire with some dignity and maintain their standard of living; more importantly, they're concerned that their kids are not going to be able to match their standard of living and the upward trajectory of their lives, the idea that if you work hard, if you take responsibility in this country, you can get ahead.

Now, there are a lot of issues that we face in this country, but nothing is more important than restoring, making real that ideal that if you work hard in this country, you can make it. And everything I think about every single day that I'm President revolves around that issue, along with keeping the American people safe. And the problem I've got right now is not that we're on the wrong side of issues. There's not an issue out there in which we do not enjoy majority support. Immigration reform, the majority agrees with us. Minimum wage, the majority agrees with us. Equal pay for equal work, the majority agrees with us. Increasing clean energy, the majority agrees with us. Invest in education, early childhood education, making college more affordable—folks on our side. That's not my problem. That's not our problem.

Our problem is very simple: We have a Congress that currently is controlled, at least half of it, by an ideological faction that is not representative of the traditions of the Republican Party as I understood them, maybe because I come from the Land of Lincoln. I thought we believed in investing in infrastructure. I thought we believed in science. I didn't think those were partisan issues. I thought we believed in education. But this crowd doesn't believe in science, doesn't really believe in investing in our kids to make sure that upward mobility exists, doesn't believe in climate change, doesn't think that there's really a problem in terms of the pay gap between men and women, isn't interested in providing help for families.

They operate on a single theory, which is, if government is dismantled and folks at the top can do more and more without restraint, that everybody else is going to benefit from it. I don't know if they actually believe it, but that's what they say. And this is not a situation of equivalence where the Democrats are this far left, crazy group and we're not willing to meet in the middle. And if you need a better example than that, take a look at a health care law that uses the private sector to encourage people to buy insurance and has brought health care inflation down to its lowest rate in 50

years. And you would think that I had dismantled the entire free market system, despite the fact that we now have somewhere between 13 and 15 million people who have insurance now that didn't have it before.

So I need a new Congress. But at a minimum, I've got to have a Democratic Senate. And that's why you're here. Which leads me to my last point: If in fact people agree with us, why is it so hard for us to get a Democratic Senate and a Democratic House? Well, part of it is demographics. I was in Brooklyn with de Blasio—this is right before he was about to be elected—and we were coming from this wonderful school that's training kids in math and science. And we're driving down Brooklyn and crowds are cheering, and we go into this place to buy some cheesecake, and people are hugging me and, "Oh, my uncle just got on Obamacare, and it's terrific." And a woman yells out, "What can I do to help?" And I said, "Move to Nebraska!" [*Laughter*] I don't need 80 percent of the vote in New York City—[*laughter*]—or Chicago. But Democrats tend to congregate a little more densely, which puts us at a disadvantage in the House. Obviously, the nature of the Senate means that California has the same number of Senate seats as Wyoming. That puts us at a disadvantage. Gerrymandering in many of these States puts us at a disadvantage.

So there are some structural reasons why, despite the fact that Republican ideas are largely rejected by the public, it's still hard for us to break through. But the second reason is, we have a congenital disease, which is we don't like voting in midterms. Our voters are younger, more minorities, more single women, more working class folks who are busy and trying to get to work, trying to find work. And oftentimes, we opt out during midterms. If we had the same turnout in 2012 that we had had in 2010, I might have lost. Instead, of course, we had a very significant and solid victory.

So this is pretty straightforward: I need more votes. I need more people voting to reflect our values and what we care about and our stance on the issues, which, in turn, leads to Senators and Congressmen who then vote on behalf of actually getting stuff done. A bunch of you, because you've known me for a long time, came up and commiserated while we were taking pictures, "Oh, these folks are so mean, and there's always slinging and hurling stones and arrows at you," and all this. And I said: "You know what, it turns out—maybe I'm from Chicago—I'm a tough guy. It doesn't really bother me too much."

There is one thing that bothers me, which is when I hear folks saying, oh, you know, if you just play golf with John Boehner more—[*laughter*]—and we're just trying harder to be more bipartisan, then we'd get more stuff done. That's not the problem. [*Laughter*] On every issue, we are more than happy to sit down in reasonable fashion and compromise. The problem is not that we're too mean or we're too partisan. The problem is, I don't have enough votes, full stop.

The first 2 years, when we had a Democratic House and a Democratic Senate, we had the most productive legislature since the 1960s, since Lyndon Johnson; more significant, meaningful domestic legislation than any time since Medicare was passed. House Republicans take over, and we now have—you remember Harry Truman with the do-nothing Congress? This is a less productive Congress than the do-nothing Congress. [*Laughter*] This Congress makes the do-nothing Congress look like the New Deal. [*Laughter*]

So I need everybody to feel a sense of urgency. That's what we're here tonight to talk about. And whatever else I say, whatever issues you are concerned about, ultimately, it translates into math: Are we turning out voters who, in turn, produce majorities that allow us to advance the values that we care about? Everything else is just talk. And if we don't feel that sense of urgency in this election, we're going to have problems. And if we do, then in the next 2½ years, we can make as much progress as we did the first 2 years I was in office.

All right. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:17 p.m. at the residence of Fred Eychaner and Dan Whittaker. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the Nomination of Shaun L.S. Donovan To Be Director of the Office of Management and Budget and Julián Castro To Be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

May 23, 2014

The President. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Please, have a seat. Have a seat. When I took office, businesses were shedding 800,000 jobs a month, our deficits were heading towards $1 trillion a year, and every member of my Cabinet had a tough job in front of them.

And few had a tougher job than Shaun Donovan. The housing bubble that burst triggered the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, and the irresponsibility of a few bad actors badly hurt millions of responsible, hard-working Americans. Home values had fallen 20 percent from the year before. New housing starts had fallen nearly 80 percent from their peak. Hundreds of thousands of construction workers were out of a job. And a record number of people were behind on their mortgages.

And 5 years later, things look a lot different. Home sales are up nearly 35 percent. Construction is up by more than 120 percent. New foreclosures are down by nearly half. And while we're not anywhere near where we need to be yet, millions of families have been able to come up for air because they're no longer underwater on their mortgages. A $50 billion settlement by the big banks means justice has been done for hundreds of thousands of homeowners who were unfairly targeted by deceptive mortgage schemes. And all this is in part because of the outstanding work of Shaun Donovan.

Now, here's the problem: When you're good at your job, people always want you to do even more. [*Laughter*] And that's why today I am nominating Shaun to be the next Director of the Office of Management and Budget. And to take his place at HUD, I am nominating another all-star who's done a fantastic job in San Antonio over the past 5 years, Mayor Julián Castro.

But before I talk about Julián, I want to embarrass Shaun a little more. [*Laughter*]

Over the years, Shaun has taken an agency with a $40 billion budget; he's made it smarter, and he's made it more efficient. He's changed the way HUD uses data to solve problems and save taxpayer dollars. He's helped build strong, sustainable neighborhoods and connect those neighborhoods with good schools and good jobs. He's helped reduce homelessness among our veterans by 24 percent since 2010. And he's helped 4.3 million families buy their piece of the American Dream: a new home.

Shaun has helped us navigate some unexpected challenges as well. When Hurricane Sandy slammed ashore, it was personal for Shaun. He was born in New York City, got married in New Jersey, raised his kids in Brooklyn. Once he took his driving—he once took his driving test on a road that was wiped out by the storm, so he understood what this devastation meant to a community that he loved. So when we were looking for somebody to lead the recovery and rebuilding efforts, I knew Shaun was the right person for the job. And he has come through, helping the communities he knows so well not only rebuild, but rebuild smarter and better.

So Shaun has earned a reputation as a great manager, a fiscally responsible leader, and somebody who knows how the decisions we make here in Washington affect people's lives all across the country. And that's why I'm absolutely confident he will do a great job leading the Office of Management and Budget and help even more hard-working Americans get ahead. And my guess is that Shaun is grateful to my outgoing head of OMB, Sylvia Burwell, and her team for leaving behind a deficit that they've cut by more than half since I took office. I'm just saying, that's helpful. [*Laughter*]

Director-designate Donovan. High bar. [*Laughter*]

The President. Now, obviously, we've also got to make sure that as we move Shaun into a new position, that we've got somebody who is

going to do an outstanding job at HUD. And that public servant is Julián Castro.

Now, the first time most Americans heard this man speak is when he gave a speech at the Democratic National Convention almost 2 years ago. And they saw this young guy, a pretty good speaker, not bad looking—[*laughter*]—talk about how America is the only place where his story could even be possible. And I watched, and I thought, "That's not bad." [*Laughter*]

But the people of San Antonio have known about Julián and his brother, Congressman Joaquin Castro, who is here today, along with Leader Pelosi and Congressman and chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Hinojosa—they've known about him for a long time. As mayor, Julián has been focused on revitalizing one of our most wonderful cities, planning thousands of housing units downtown, attracting hundreds of millions of dollars of investment. He's built relationships with mayors all across the country. He's become a leader in housing and economic development.

Today, companies are choosing to create jobs in San Antonio. And this year, my administration named the East Side of San Antonio a Promise Zone, a place where citizens and the Federal Government are working together to remake the community, family by family and block by block. And it speaks to the fact that Julián cares deeply about the people he serves and the city that he loves. It's also a reminder that he's never forgotten where he comes from.

Julián's grandmother came to this country from Mexico. She worked as a maid, worked as a cook, worked as a babysitter, whatever she had to do to keep a roof over her family's head. And that's because for her, and generations of Americans like her, a home is more than just a house. A home is a source of pride and security, a place to raise a family and put down roots and build up savings for college or a business or retirement or write a lifetime of memories. And maybe one day the kid grows up in that home and is able to go on to get a great education and become the mayor of San Antonio and become a member of the President's Cabinet.

Julián ha vivido el Sueño Americano. And it's precisely because he's lived out the American Dream that he'll work his tail off to make sure more people can travel that same path and earn their own dreams as well.

So I want to thank Shaun's wife Liza and her very outstanding boys, one of whom badly beat me in ping pong during a Super Bowl game. [*Laughter*] I want to thank them for sharing husband and dad with us a little bit longer. I want to thank Julián's wife Erica and this adorable young lady who gave me a hug before we came in for agreeing to let Julián take on a new challenge.

I'm absolutely confident that these two individuals are going to do a great job because they've done a great job in everything that they've done in the past. They are proven leaders. They're proven managers. They're going to be effective. And most importantly, they've got huge heart. They're involved in public service for the right reasons.

And for that reason, I hope that the Senate confirms them both without games or without delay. And with that, I want to give both of them an opportunity to say a few words. I'm going to start with Shaun. Come on up.

Director-designate Donovan. Thank you so much, Mr. President. I first heard the name Barack Obama in 1991 at a dinner with a couple who were among my closest friends. The night before, the husband had taken over the "Harvard Law Review," but was in a grumpy mood. I asked, "How could that be?" And he explained that he was required to address the entire law school immediately after the outgoing head, Barack Obama. [*Laughter*]

Of course, he had it easy. Try going between Barack Obama and Julián Castro. [*Laughter*] But then his wife said that Barack Obama would one day be President because he was one of the most remarkable people she had ever met.

Mr. President, after watching you guide this country through one of its most trying periods in history, with courage and grace, I believe those words even more today than I did 5½ years ago when I joined your team.

Thank you for your leadership and the confidence that you've shown in me. I also want to offer my congratulations to Mayor Castro. You've done outstanding work in San Antonio. I've seen it with my own eyes. And I know that you'll do exactly the same in your new role.

And let me tell you, you are one lucky guy, because the HUD team is a group of extraordinary public servants. It's been my honor to work with them to help the Nation recover from an historic economic crisis that began in the housing market. I'm proud to say that together, we've worked with millions of families to fight off foreclosure, reduce the number of veterans experiencing homelessness by 24 percent in the last 3 years, helped communities hit by natural disaster rebuild stronger than before, and revitalized distressed neighborhoods so that children's futures won't be determined by their ZIP Code, but by their talent and work ethic.

I have loved this work, and I'm reminded today that Dr. King said: "Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Every step towards justice requires dedicated individuals." HUD is made up of such individuals, and I will miss everything about working with them. Thank you, HUD team. Well, almost everything. I'm known around the office as a numbers guy, and at HUD, I often hear groans when I ask to see a spreadsheet that someone is holding at a meeting. If confirmed, I'll be glad to go to a place where my love of spreadsheets will finally be embraced. [*Laughter*]

In all seriousness, as the President said earlier this year, the budget is not just about numbers, it's about our values, and it's about our future. That's why I've always viewed OMB's unique role as one of the most critical in Government. Let me recognize Sylvia Burwell, whose extra-large shoes I have to fill. Some of you know, Sylvia and I actually lived in the same dorm freshman year in college, and we've been friends ever since. So I know she won't mind late-night calls for her late—for her sage advice and guidance. And I look forward to building on your work, Sylvia, with the remarkable team that you've built at OMB—Brian Deese, Beth Cobert, every one of you that's here today and across OMB—a really stellar team.

If Congress approves my nomination, Mr. President, it will be a great honor to join your White House; Mr. Vice President, to join yours as well, and work even more closely with you both to continue to move our Nation forward.

I also want to say a special thank you to my colleagues in the Cabinet. You've become not only close partners, but also good friends. Now, I'm going to be taking your calls for more funding—[*laughter*]—but I know that the mutual respect and trust that we've built—[*laughter*]—will allow us to make difficult decisions to leave this country a better place for the next generation. Thank you.

Finally, I want to thank my wife Liza and our two sons Lucas and Milo, who, after a year and a half of us being apart, left our beloved Brooklyn to join us here in DC. I'll never forget the morning I was first nominated in 2008. Liza and I woke them up early, brought them down to our bed to have that difficult conversation that I wouldn't be there on school days, but that I'd make it back on weekends whenever I could.

After explaining everything, the very first thing that came out of Milo's mouth—he was 9 at the time, and a lot shorter—it wasn't about the hardship that they would endure. He looked up at me and said, "First of all, Daddy, congratulations." My public service is their public service, and I can't thank them enough.

The President. That's true. [*Applause*] Good job.

Director-designate Donovan. Once again, congratulations, Mayor Castro. Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President.

Secretary-designate Castro. First of all, Mr. President, this is quite an honor. Thank you very much for the honor and for the opportunity. To Secretary Donovan, I have some very big shoes to fill, I know. I understand that fully. However, I just want to say, you understand the importance of urban development and housing in your new role, don't you? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Vice President, it's an honor to join your administration, the President's administration. And I also want to thank Madam Leader, you,

and Chairman Hinojosa for being here. And I am here today with my father, with my mother, who, along with my grandmother, raised my brother Joaquin and I as a single parent after the age of 8. And I'm here with the two ladies who have stolen my heart, my wife Erica and my daughter Carina.

To be your nominee, President Obama, is simply a blessing to me. I am here alone at the podium right now, but I stand on the shoulders of so many folks over the generations who have worked very hard and dreamt the American Dream and have reached it. And I feel blessed to have reached it as well. And especially to the great many folks in San Antonio, I want to say a huge *muchísimas gracias*—thank you very much—for your support.

And my brother Joaquin and I grew up on the West Side of San Antonio, taking public transportation and living in rental homes as we grew up. And it was there that both of us got a sense of what is possible in America and an understanding that just because you were of modest means does not mean that your aspirations or your opportunity ought to be limited. And it certainly means that you can have the talent to succeed and achieve the American Dream.

After 5 years as mayor of my hometown, I know this much: We are in a century of cities. America's cities are growing again, and housing is at the top of the agenda. I look forward to being part of a department that will help ensure that millions of Americans all across the country have the chance to get good, safe, affordable housing and to reach their American dreams. And if confirmed, I stand ready to assist you, Mr. President, your administration, and local officials across the country to ensure that we do housing right and that because of it, more Americans achieve their dreams. Thank you very much.

The President. So I'm hoping for a quick confirmation. I think listening to these two individuals gives you a pretty good sense of why I'm nominating them for these positions. They're going to do outstanding work. I have—I told Shaun it's very rare where an announcement about an OMB confirmation gets people choked up. [*Laughter*] You're really milking that thing, man. [*Laughter*]

And I do want to point out that the mayor was remiss just in one last element in his remarks. I'm assuming that he's pulling for the Spurs to win the next two games.

Secretary-designate Castro. That's right. Go Spurs, go! [*Laughter*]

The President. Go Spurs, go. All right. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:43 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-designate of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell; Liza Gilbert, wife, and Milo and Lucas Donovan, sons, of Director-designate Donovan; and Carina V. Castro, daughter of Secretary-designate Castro. Director-designate Donovan referred to David G. Ellen, executive vice president and general counsel, Cablevision Systems Corporation, in his former capacity as president of the Harvard Law Review succeeding the President's tenure in that role; and Beth Cobert, Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget. Secretary-designate Castro referred to his parents Jesse Guzman and Rosie Castro.

The President's Weekly Address
May 24, 2014

Hi, everybody. It's Memorial Day weekend, a chance for Americans to get together with family and friends, break out the grill, and kick off the unofficial start of summer. More importantly, it's a time to remember the heroes whose sacrifices made these moments possible: our men and women in uniform who gave their lives to keep our Nation safe and free.

From those shots fired at Lexington and Concord more than two centuries ago to our newest generation of veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, our history shines with

patriots who answered the call to serve. They put their lives on the line to defend the country they love. And in the end, many gave that "last full measure of devotion" so that our Nation would endure.

Every single one of us owes our fallen heroes a profound debt of gratitude. Because every time we cast our votes or speak our minds without fear, it's because they fought for our right to do that. Every chance we get to make a better life for ourselves and our families is possible because generations of patriots fought to keep America a land of opportunity, where anyone—of any race, of any religion, from any background—can make it if they try. Our country was born out of a desire to be free, and every day since, it's been protected by our men and women in uniform, people who believed so deeply in America, they were willing to give their lives for it.

We owe them so much. So this Memorial Day, we'll gather together, as Americans, to honor the fallen, with both public ceremonies and private remembrances. And I hope all Americans will take a moment this weekend to think of those who have died in service to our Nation. Say a prayer in their memories and for their families. Lay a flower where they've come to rest. Reach out to servicemembers, military families or veterans in your community, or families who have lost a loved one, and let them know that their service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Most of all, let's keep working to make sure that our country upholds our sacred trust to all who have served. In recent weeks, we've seen again how much more our Nation has to do to make sure all our veterans get the care that they deserve. And as Commander in Chief, I believe that taking care of our veterans and their families is a sacred obligation. It's been one of the causes of my Presidency. And now that we've ended the war in Iraq, and as our war in Afghanistan ends as well, we have to work even harder as a nation to make sure all our veterans get the benefits and opportunities that they have earned. They've done their duty, and they ask nothing more than that this country does ours, now and for decades to come.

Happy Memorial Day, everybody. May God watch over our fallen heroes, and may He continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:20 a.m. on May 22 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on May 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 23, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 24.

Statement on the Presidential Election in Ukraine
May 25, 2014

On behalf of all Americans, I congratulate the people of Ukraine for making their voices heard by voting in their Presidential election today. Despite provocations and violence, millions of Ukrainians went to the polls throughout the country and even in parts of eastern Ukraine, where Russian-backed separatist groups sought to disenfranchise entire regions, some courageous Ukrainians still were able to cast their ballots. We commend the resolve of all those who participated, as well as the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to conduct these elections in the face of those threats.

Throughout the last few months, the Ukrainian people have repeatedly demonstrated their desire to choose their leaders without interference and to live in a democracy where they can determine their own future free of violence and intimidation. This election is another important step forward in the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to unify the country and reach out to all of its citizens to ensure their concerns are addressed and aspirations met.

The United States looks forward to working with the next President, as well as the democratically elected Parliament, to support Ukraine's efforts to enact important political and economic reforms. We also continue to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, condemn

and reject Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, and remain committed to working with Ukraine and other partners to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With United States Ambassador to Afghanistan James B. Cunningham, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, Commander General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, and Senior Military Leadership at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan
May 25, 2014

The President. Well, I just want to take a few minutes to say thank you to all of you. The main reason I took this trip—in addition to bringing Brad Paisley—is to make sure that everybody here knows, as we're coming into Memorial Day weekend, we're aware of the sacrifices that so many have made on behalf of our freedom here in Afghanistan, and also to make sure that we're reminded of the sacrifices you and your families make every single day.

This is a tough job. But as I came down the stairs, I had a chance to see the Twin Towers on a poster. Some of you know that I had the chance to visit the 9/11 Memorial Museum that's just gone up in New York. And it's a reminder of why we're here. We are now in the process of transition, and I've been getting constant updates from General Dunford and Jim about the progress that we've made. We've seen an election in Afghanistan, at least in the first round, go successfully. And I'm going to have to make some decisions in conjunction with the folks on the ground about how we manage the transition not just through the end of this year, but post-2014. And we'll probably be announcing some decisions fairly shortly. But I thought it was important for me to make sure that I check in directly with folks face to face before those decisions were finally made.

I'm impressed with not just the progress that's been made, but the dedication and the can-do spirit that is continually exhibited throughout this war theater, and I just want to say thank you for that. And Joe has given me, I think, a fairly detailed briefing about what current plans are and the progress we're making with the training of Afghan forces. I think it has gone—I'll be honest with you—better than I might have expected just a year ago, and that's a testament to the great work that all of you have done, as well as the pride the Afghan people have taken in the possibility of being able to secure their own country and install a government that's accountable to them.

And so I very much appreciate all the great work that you have done. And I appreciate it. And I think the American people thank you as well.

Gen. Dunford. Thanks, Mr. President.

The President. All right?

Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. in the Joint Operating Center. In his remarks, he referred to musician Brad D. Paisley, who traveled with the President aboard Air Force One and performed a concert for the troops that evening.

Remarks to United States Troops at Bagram Air Base
May 25, 2014

The President. Hello, Bagram!

Audiene members. Hooah!

The President. Hooah! Well, I know it's a little late, but I was in the neighborhood and thought I'd stop by. First of all, I want everybody to give a huge round of applause to your commander, General Joe Dunford. Please give him an outstanding, rousing acknowledgement. I am grateful to him for his leadership of our coalition here in Afghanistan and for his

lifetime of distinguished service to the Marine Corps and to America.

And can everybody please give it up to Brad Paisley? Now, I want to say this about Brad. First of all, he's a great supporter of our troops, a great supporter of your families. Two years ago, we had him at the White House to perform for troops and military families during the Fourth of July celebration. Him coming here today was not easy. He had just started a tour, and he had to juggle a lot of stuff and had to try to figure out how to explain it to people without explaining it to people, and his wife and two young sons and promoters and agents—and without going into the details—this was a big sacrifice for him. And he did it because he cares so deeply about you. So I'm so grateful to him.

I want to make clear, though, I will not be singing so——

Audience members. Aww.

The President. Oh, you really want me to sing, huh? [*Applause*] No, no, no. But I do want to just say to Brad, thank you so much for doing this.

I want to acknowledge our outstanding Ambassador, Jim Cunningham, who's here with his lovely wife. And Jim leads an incredible team of civilians at our Embassy and across this country. They are also making sacrifices, also away from their families, oftentimes themselves at risk as they serve. I know those of you in uniform couldn't do your jobs without these Americans as your partners. So we salute the dedicated service of all the civilians who are here, led by Jim Cunningham. Give them a big round of applause.

Now, I guess I also should mention that we've got a few folks here as part of the 10th Mountain Division—[*applause*]—"Climb to Glory." We've got the 455th Airwing in the house. [*Applause*] The Task Force Muleskinners. [*Applause*] Task Force Thunder. [*Applause*] Task Force Rugged.

Audience member. Yeah!

The President. [*Laughter*] To all of you: I'm here on a single mission, and that is to thank you for your extraordinary service. I thank you as our—as your Commander in Chief, because you inspire me. Your willingness to serve, to step forward at a time of war and say, "Send me," is the reason the United States stays strong and free. Of all the honors that I have as serving as President, nothing matches serving as your Commander in Chief.

But I'm also here representing 300 million Americans who want to say thank you as well. I know sometimes, when you're over here, away from home, away from family, you may not truly absorb how much the folks back home are thinking about you. So I just want you to know when it comes to supporting you and your families, the American people stand united. We support you. We are proud of you. We stand in awe of your service.

And you can see it in American actions every single day. You see it in the kids across America who send you all those care packages and all those Girl Scout cookies. [*Applause*] Those are pretty popular, huh? You like those cookies, huh? All right. I'll bet you'll get some more now.

You see it in the neighbors and the coworkers who volunteer to help your moms and dads and wives and husbands and sons and daughters at school and on their sports teams. You see it at the airports when you return stateside, all the folks standing up, applauding, lining up to shake your hand and welcoming you home.

You see it when entire stadiums get to their feet to salute our troops and our veterans. Just the other day, I welcomed the Super Bowl Champion Seattle Seahawks, and——

Audience members. Woo!

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Listen, I'm a Bears fan, but I—but the one thing that I saw and I've seen in every sports team that comes to the White House is the work that they do, visiting Walter Reed, Bethesda, doing work with military families. In fact, to help announce their draft picks this month, the Seattle Seahawks selected Jeff Baker, who's a Seahawks fan, but also a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan and a proud sergeant in the U.S. Army, to make that draft pick. Because they wanted to send a signal that we love our sports and we love our football—that's fun

and games—but this is the competition that counts, and these are the real heroes.

You see America's gratitude every time I present a veteran of Afghanistan with our Nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor. We bestow that medal on an individual. But every time—every time—that we bestow that medal, whoever is the recipient says he accepts it on behalf of the whole team and everybody who wears the uniform of the American Armed Forces. And when those citations are read, Americans all across the country stop, and they listen, and they're stirred by the sacrifices you render for each other and for all of us.

So I'm here to say thank you, and I'm here to say how proud I am of you. And I'm here to say how proud I am of your families, because in some ways—in ways large and small—they're sacrificing just like you are.

But I'm also here because after more than a decade of war, we're at a pivotal moment. Last year marked a major milestone: For the first time, Afghan forces took the lead to secure their own country. And today, you're in a support role, helping to train and assist Afghan forces. For many of you, this will be your last tour in Afghanistan. And by the end of this year, the transition will be complete, and Afghans will take full responsibility for their security, and our combat mission will be over. America's war in Afghanistan will come to a responsible end.

Now, that progress is because of you and the more than half a million Americans—military and civilian—who have served here in Afghanistan. And I don't want you to ever forget why you are here or how vital your mission is to our national security.

Some of you may know, recently, I was in New York City, and we were there to dedicate the new 9/11 Museum. I had time to spend with the survivors and with the families who lost loved ones and with the first responders who had rushed to the scene and had a chance to ponder the portraits and the biographies of the thousands who were killed that day and to think about those who were killed in Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon. And once again, we resolved to never forget what happened on that September day and to do everything in our power to prevent something like that from ever happening again. That's why you're here. That's why you're here.

And I notice—some of you don't remember—because as I was getting a briefing while Brad was singing, I saw a picture of the Twin Towers in the operation room nearby, so I know you don't forget.

And 4 years ago, on my first visit to Bagram as President, I laid out our mission. And General Dunford and Ambassador Cunningham just gave me a briefing on your progress. And today, every single one of you, everybody who has served here, and all the members of our coalition can be proud because you are completing our mission. You're completing the mission.

We said that we were going to deny Al Qaida safe haven. And since then, we have decimated the Al Qaida's leadership in the tribal regions, and our troops here at Bagram have played a central role in supporting our counterterrorism operations, including the one that delivered justice to Usama bin Laden. So, along with our intelligence personnel, you've helped prevent attacks and save American lives back home. Al Qaida is on its heels in this part of the world, and that's because of you.

We said that we were going to reverse the Taliban's momentum. And so you went on the offensive, driving the Taliban out of its strongholds. Look, everybody knows Afghanistan still is a very dangerous place. Insurgents still launch cowardly attacks against innocent civilians. But just look at the progress that you've made possible: Afghans reclaiming their communities, and more girls returning to school, dramatic improvements in public health and life expectancy and literacy. That's your legacy. That's what you did. Even with all the challenges, more Afghans have hope for their future. And so much of that is because of you.

We said that we were going to strengthen the capacity of Afghan forces so they could take more responsibility for their own security. So you've been training Afghan forces and building Afghan forces up. And we know

they've still got a long way to go. But for nearly a year, Afghans have been in the lead, and they're making enormous sacrifices. You look at the casualties they're taking on. They are willing to fight. Afghan forces are growing stronger. Afghans are proud to be defending their own country, and that again, so much of that is because of you.

Think about last month's election. Despite all the threats from the Taliban, the Afghan people refused to be terrorized. They registered to vote. Afghan security forces secured thousands of polling places. Then millions of Afghans lined up to cast their ballot. And next month's runoff will be another step toward the first democratic transfer of power in the history of this nation. That's a tribute to the courage and determination of the people of Afghanistan. But it is also a tribute to you and the sacrifices of so many Americans and our coalition partners, everything that you've done over the years.

Now we know that this progress has come at a heavy price. Tomorrow is Memorial Day. And at bases here in Afghanistan and the towns across America, we will pause and we'll pay tribute to all those who've laid down their lives for our freedom. And that includes nearly 2,200 American patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice, that "last full measure of devotion," right here in Afghanistan. I know you've stood in front of those battle crosses. I know many of you carry the memories of your fallen comrades in your heart today. We will honor every single one of them, not just tomorrow, but forever.

And I want you to know, our gratitude is shared by the Afghan people. One of them—one of Afghanistan's leading women, a Member of Parliament—recently wrote an open letter. I don't know if many of you had a chance to see it. She described all the changes that have taken place here, including the millions of girls going to school and pursuing their dreams. And she wrote this—I want you to listen to this—she wrote: "It's been a difficult journey, marked by blood and violence, but we have made significant gains and achievements, which would not have been possible without the generous support of the international community, especially the American people." Especially the American people. She's talking about all of you. She's talking about your families. She's talking about those who we've lost. That's the difference—and the legacy—that you can be proud of.

Now, even as our combat mission ends later this year, I want everybody to know, in this country and across the region, America's commitment to the people of Afghanistan will endure. With our strategic partnership, we'll continue to stand with Afghans as they strengthen their institutions, as they build their economy, as they improve their lives: men and women and boys and girls.

And I've made it clear that we're prepared to continue cooperating with our Afghan partners on two security missions: training and equipping Afghan forces and targeting—counterterrorism targets against Al Qaida. And once Afghanistan has sworn in its new President, I'm hopeful we'll sign a bilateral security agreement that lets us move forward. And with that bilateral security agreement, assuming it is signed, we can plan for a limited military presence in Afghanistan beyond 2014. Because after all the sacrifices we've made, we want to preserve the gains that you have helped to win. And we're going to make sure that Afghanistan can never again—ever—be used again to launch an attack against our country.

So our combat mission here will come to an end. But our obligations to you and your families have only just begun. The Al Qaida leadership may be on the ropes, but in other parts of the world, Al Qaida affiliates are evolving and pose a serious threat. We're going to have to stay strong, and we're going to have to stay vigilant. And fortunately, we've got the best led, best trained, best equipped military in human history. And as Commander in Chief, I'm going to keep it that way.

We're going to stay strong by taking care of your families back home. The First Lady, Michelle, and Vice President Joe Biden's wife Jill have made this their mission, because your families serve too. They're heroes on the home front. And so we're going to keep Joining

Forces to make sure more Americans are stepping up to support and honor those extraordinary families.

We're going to stay strong by taking care of our wounded warriors and our veterans. Because helping our wounded warriors and veterans heal isn't just a promise, it's a sacred obligation. And as you come home, some of you will return to civilian life, and we want to make sure you can enjoy the American Dream that you helped to defend. So with the transition assistance to help you begin the next chapter of your life, that's going to keep America strong. The credentials and licenses to help you find a job worthy of your incredible skills, that will keep America strong. Making sure the post-9/11 GI bill is in place and delivering for you the kind of education that you have earned, that will keep America strong.

And I keep on saying to every company back home, "If you want somebody who knows how to get the job done, hire a vet."

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Hire a vet. [*Applause*] Hire a vet. Because like generations before you, we need you to help us write the next great chapter in the American story, and I know you'll do that because I've seen the character of your service, and I know the strength of our country.

Going back to New York and thinking about that tragedy 12 years ago, in those awful moments after the Twin Towers fell, as the wreckage was still burning, those at the scene were desperately looking for survivors, one of those searching was a detective at the NYPD. And as he climbed through the debris, he spotted something in the rubble. It was a flag. It was torn up. Parts of it were burned, but it was still intact.

And today, that flag is at the 9/11 Museum. It's dusty and it's torn and you can see the burn marks from the fires. That flag has been through a lot. But the thing you notice is, its broad stripes and bright stars still shine. Its red, white, and blue still inspire. After all it's been through, after all America has been through, our flag is still there.

And our flag is still there because when our Nation was attacked, a generation—this generation, the 9/11 generation—stepped up and said, "Send me." Our flag is still there because you've served with honor in dusty villages and city streets and in rugged bases and remote outposts, in Helmand and Kandahar and Khost and Kunar and Paktika and Nuristan. Our flag is still there because through this long war, you never wavered in your belief that people deserve to live free from fear, over here and back home. Our flag will always be there, because the freedom and liberty it represents to the world will always be defended by patriots like you.

So I'm here to say thank you. I'm here to say I'm proud of you. The American people are proud of you. God bless you. God bless the United States Armed Forces. And God Bless our United States of America.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:14 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, commander, international Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan; musician Brad D. Paisley, his wife Kimberly Williams-Paisley, and their sons Huck and Jasper; Leslie Genier, wife of U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan James B. Cunningham; Purple Heart recipient Sgt. Jeffery C. Baker, USA; and Fawzia Koofi, Vice President, National Assembly of Afghanistan.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia
May 26, 2014

Thank you so much. Please be seated. Thank you, Secretary Hagel, for your introduction and for your lifetime of service, from a young Army sergeant in Vietnam to our Nation's 24th Secretary of Defense.

Vice President Biden, Jill, Chairman Dempsey, Major General Buchanan, Patrick Hallinan, Chaplain Brainerd; to our men and women in uniform here and around the world; to our outstanding veterans; and most of all, to

the Gold Star families here to remember the loved ones you've lost: Michelle and I are humbled and honored to commemorate this Memorial Day with you.

Every year, this ceremony marks another page in the life of our Nation, this year in particular, as we recognize the 150th anniversary of this holy space, Arlington National Cemetery. One hundred and fifty years ago, war raged on hillsides and farmlands not far from where we gather today. A nation ill-prepared for war found itself overwhelmed with the task of burying so many of its sons. So we declared upon this hill a final resting place for those willing to lay down their lives for the country that we love. And on a spring day in 1864, Private William Christman of Pennsylvania was the first American to find eternal rest on these grounds.

Over that century and a half, in times of war, in times of peace, Americans have come here, to pay tribute not only to the loved ones who meant the world to them, but to all our heroes, known and unknown. Here, in perfect military order, lie the patriots who won our freedom and saved the Union. Here, side by side, lie the privates and the generals who defeated fascism and laid the foundation for an American century. Here lie the Americans who fought through Vietnam and those who won a long twilight struggle against communism. And here, in Section 60, lie men and women who gave their lives to keep our homeland safe over more than a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Early this morning I returned from Afghanistan, and yesterday I visited with some of our men and women serving there, 7,000 miles from home. For more than 12 years, men and women like those I met with have borne the burden of our Nation's security. Now, because of their profound sacrifice, because of the progress they have made, we're at a pivotal moment. Our troops are coming home. By the end of this year, our war in Afghanistan will finally come to an end. And yesterday at Bagram, and here today at Arlington, we pay tribute to the nearly 2,200 American patriots who've made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan. We will honor them always.

Today, in small towns across America, in cemeteries throughout our country and around the world, and here on these solemn hillsides, the families of our fallen share stories of the lives they led. Our hearts ache in their absence. But our hearts are also full, full in knowing that their legacy shines bright in the people that they loved the most. Through almost unimaginable loss, these families of the fallen have tapped a courage and resolve that many of us will never know. And we draw comfort and strength from their example.

We draw strength from the promise of their children. Today Michelle and Jill are with 200 brave boys and girls whose parents gave everything they had in service to their country.

They were mothers and fathers like Staff Sergeant Michael Cardenaz, who gave his life in Afghanistan 4 years ago. The years since have been hard for Michael's family. And yet, with the love of their mother, Macarena, his three youngest daughters have displayed a strength beyond their years.

Mariella, the oldest of the three, has become a mentor to other children who've lost their parents. Mariliz, the middle girl, was used to her dad carrying her everywhere when she was little; now 7, she shepherds her little sister, Marianna. And Marianna, who was just a baby when her dad was deployed, is starting to understand what it means that her daddy served his country. Mariella, Mariliz, and Marianna are here today. And we say to you and to all these courageous children: Your parents' bravery lives on in you. You will never walk alone. Your country will be there to help you grow up into the young men and women your parents always knew you would be. And that's our pledge to you.

We draw strength as well from the love of the spouses of the fallen. Sergeant First Class Joseph Gantt was a young man, but already a veteran of World War II, when he met Clara Edwards on a train headed to California. He spent 2 years courting Clara before she finally agreed to marry him. Then, when Joseph deployed to Korea, he told his young wife to remarry if he didn't come back. She told him no. He had a hard enough time getting her to say

yes in the first place, she said. [*Laughter*] He had waited 2 years for her; she'd wait as long as it took for him to come home.

When Joseph went missing in action, Clara waited. She waited 63 years. Meanwhile, our country continued to work to bring home the missing from all our wars. And then, last December—last December—his remains finally identified, Joseph returned home to be laid to rest. Clara never remarried during those 63 years. And now 96 years old, she was there to welcome him home. And we are honored to have Clara Gantt here with us today. Clara. [*Applause*]

We also draw strength from the parents who have given their sons and daughters to America.

Earlier this year, in my State of the Union Address, I spoke of the remarkable story and grueling recovery of Sergeant First Class Cory Remsburg, who was severely injured by a massive roadside bomb in Afghanistan. And when he stood, there in the balcony, it reminded our entire Nation that we are blessed to be protected by patriots like him. But that was only part of the story. Today I want to close with the story of Cory's brother-in-arms, Sergeant Roberto Sanchez, who was killed by that same explosion.

Rob wasn't a big guy, but his mother Wendy remembers that he was "larger than life," always surrounded by friends and melting hearts with a devastating smile. Rob admired the Army from a young age, dressed up as a soldier the first time he went out for Halloween and for many Halloweens after that. He meticulously arranged and rearranged G.I. Joes on his bedroom floor. And when he watched the Twin Towers fall that awful September day, Rob found his calling to serve his country. A proud Army Ranger who took care of his fellow soldiers just as he did his own family, he'd tell Wendy, "Mom . . . I'm your Superman."

In October 2009, Rob was on his fifth deployment, and Rob and Cory were finishing a mission with their fellow Rangers in Kandahar. And that's when the bomb went off. And that's when this American family made a sacrifice the depths of which few of us will ever truly comprehend.

And in the years since, Wendy has dug deep to find the strength to live without Rob. She keeps in touch with Cory, who she finally had a chance to meet and spend some time with this past week, sharing their memories of Rob. She runs half-marathons. She and her husband pour their hearts into raising their youngest son Logan, who she says wants to be just like Rob, which she knows means she'll probably send another son into military service.

Today Wendy is watching this ceremony from home near Indianapolis, on a Memorial Day in America that has been made safe by her son's sacrifice. And every day, when she looks at the old photo of her and Rob that sits on her dresser, she's reminded that although he is gone, he will always inspire her and will always be her Superman.

For the parents who have lost a child, for the husbands and wives who have lost a partner, for the children who have lost a parent, this day and this place are solemn reminders of the extraordinary sacrifice they have made in our name. But today reminds us as well that for these family and for their comrades-in-arms, their service to our Nation endures. There are few who truly understand what it means to send a child into war or to watch a battle buddy give his life to save others. On this Memorial Day, and every day, these are the families and veterans we're sworn to look after.

And so here, on these hallowed grounds, we rededicate ourselves to our sacred obligations to all who wear America's uniform and to the families who stand by them always: that our troops will have the resources they need to do their job; that our Nation will never stop searching for those who've gone missing, who are held as prisoners of war; that, as we've been reminded in recent days, we must do more to keep faith with our veterans and their families and ensure they get the care and benefits and opportunities that they've earned and that they deserve. These Americans have done their duty. They ask nothing more than that our country does ours, now and for decades to come.

The fallen patriots we memorialize today gave their last full measure of devotion. Not so we might mourn them, though we do. Not so

that our Nation might honor their sacrifice, although it does. They gave their lives so that we might live ours: so that a daughter might grow up to pursue her dreams; so that a wife might be able to live a long life, free and secure; so that a mother might raise her family in a land of peace and freedom. Everything that we hold precious in this country was made possible by Americans who gave their all. And because of them, our Nation is stronger, safer, and will always remain a shining beacon of freedom for the rest of the world.

May God bless the fallen and all those who serve. May God watch over their families. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:38 a.m. in the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Jeffrey S. Buchanan, commanding general, and Col. Michael E. Brainerd, USA, Joint Force headquarters command chaplain, National Capital Region and Military District of Washington; Patrick K. Hallinan, executive director, Army National Military Cemeteries; Macarena E. Cardenaz, wife, and Mariella, Mariliz, and Marianna Cardenaz, daughters, of S. Sgt. Michael David P. Cardenaz, USA, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on February 20, 2010; Clara Gantt, wife of Sfc. Joseph E. Gantt, USA, who went missing in action during the Korean war; and Wendy Holland, mother of Sgt. Robert D. Sanchez, USA, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on October 1, 2009, her husband Will Holland, and their son Logan.

Remarks on the Drawdown of United States Military Personnel in Afghanistan

May 27, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. As you know, this weekend, I traveled to Afghanistan to thank our men and women in uniform and our deployed civilians, on behalf of a grateful nation, for the extraordinary sacrifices they make on behalf of our security. I was also able to meet with our commanding general and Ambassador to review the progress that we've made. And today I'd like to update the American people on the way forward in Afghanistan and how, this year, we will bring America's longest war to a responsible end.

The United States did not seek this fight. We went into Afghanistan out of necessity, after our Nation was attacked by Al Qaida on September 11, 2001. We went to war against Al Qaida and its extremist allies with the strong support of the American people and their representatives in Congress, with the international community and our NATO allies, and with the Afghan people, who welcomed the opportunity of a life free from the dark tyranny of extremism.

We have now been in Afghanistan longer than many Americans expected. But make no mistake: Thanks to the skill and sacrifice of our troops, diplomats, and intelligence professionals, we have struck significant blows against Al Qaida's leadership, we have eliminated Usama bin Laden, and we have prevented Afghanistan from being used to launch attacks against our homeland. We've also supported the Afghan people as they continue the hard work of building a democracy. We've extended more opportunities to their people, including women and girls. And we've helped train and equip their own security forces.

Now we're finishing the job we started. Over the last several years, we've worked to transition security responsibilities to the Afghans. One year ago, Afghan forces assumed the lead for combat operations. Since then, they've continued to grow in size and in strength, while making huge sacrifices for their country. This transition has allowed us to steadily draw down our own forces, from a peak of 100,000 U.S. troops to roughly 32,000 today.

Two thousand fourteen, therefore, is a pivotal year. Together with our allies and the

Afghan Government, we have agreed that this is the year we will conclude our combat mission in Afghanistan. This is also a year of political transition in Afghanistan. Earlier this spring, Afghans turned out in the millions to vote in the first round of their Presidential election, defying threats in order to determine their own destiny. And in just over 2 weeks, they will vote for their next President, and Afghanistan will see its first democratic transfer of power in history.

In the context of this progress, having consulted with Congress and my national security team, I've determined the nature of the commitment that America is prepared to make beyond 2014. Our objectives are clear: disrupting threats posed by Al Qaida, supporting Afghan security forces, and giving the Afghan people the opportunity to succeed as they stand on their own.

Here's how we will pursue those objectives. First, America's combat mission will be over by the end of this year. Starting next year, Afghans will be fully responsible for securing their country. American personnel will be in an advisory role. We will no longer patrol Afghan cities or towns, mountains or valleys. That is a task for the Afghan people.

Second, I've made it clear that we're open to cooperating with Afghans on two narrow missions after 2014: training Afghan forces and supporting counterterrorism operations against the remnants of Al Qaida.

Today I want to be clear about how the United States is prepared to advance those missions. At the beginning of 2015, we will have approximately 98,000 U.S.—let me start that over, just because I want to make sure we don't get this written wrong. At the beginning of 2015, we will have approximately 9,800—nine thousand eight hundred—U.S. servicemembers in different parts of the country, together with our NATO allies and other partners. By the end of 2015, we will have reduced that presence by roughly half and will have consolidated our troops in Kabul and on Bagram Airfield. One year later, by the end of 2016, our military will draw down to a normal Embassy presence in Kabul, with a security assistance component, just as we've done in Iraq.

Now, even as our troops come home, the international community will continue to support Afghans as they build their country for years to come. But our relationship will not be defined by war, it will be shaped by our financial and development assistance, as well as our diplomatic support. Our commitment to Afghanistan is rooted in the strategic partnership that we agreed to in 2012. And this plan remains consistent with discussions we've had with our NATO allies. Just as our allies have been with us every step of the way in Afghanistan, we expect that our allies will be with us going forward.

Third, we will only sustain this military presence after 2014 if the Afghan Government signs the bilateral security agreement that our two governments have already negotiated. This agreement is essential to give our troops the authorities they need to fulfill their mission, while respecting Afghan sovereignty. The two final Afghan candidates in the runoff election for President have each indicated that they would sign this agreement promptly after taking office. So I'm hopeful that we can get this done.

The bottom line is, it's time to turn the page on more than a decade in which so much of our foreign policy was focused on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. When I took office, we had nearly 180,000 troops in harm's way. By the end of this year, we will have less than 10,000. In addition to bringing our troops home, this new chapter in American foreign policy will allow us to redirect some of the resources saved by ending these wars to respond more nimbly to the changing threat of terrorism, while addressing a broader set of priorities around the globe.

I think Americans have learned that it's harder to end wars than it is to begin them. Yet this is how wars end in the 21st century: not through signing ceremonies, but through decisive blows against our adversaries, transitions to elected governments, security forces who are trained to take the lead and ultimately full responsibility. We remain committed to a sov-

ereign, secure, stable, and unified Afghanistan. And toward that end, we will continue to support Afghan-led efforts to promote peace in their country through reconciliation. We have to recognize, Afghanistan will not be a perfect place, and it is not America's responsibility to make it one. The future of Afghanistan must be decided by Afghans. But what the United States can do—what we will do—is secure our interests and help give the Afghans a chance, an opportunity, to seek a long-overdue and hard-earned peace.

America will always keep our commitments to friends and partners who step up, and we will never waver in our determination to deny Al Qaida the safe haven that they had before 9/11. That commitment is embodied by the men and women, in and out of uniform, who serve in Afghanistan today and who have served in the past. In their eyes, I see the character that sustains American security and our leadership abroad. These are mostly young people who did not hesitate to volunteer in a time of war. And as many of them begin to transition to civilian life, we will keep the promise we make to them and to all veterans and make sure they get the care and benefits that they have earned and deserve.

This 9/11 generation is part of an unbroken line of heroes who give up the comfort of the familiar to serve a half a world away, to protect their families and communities back home, and to give people they never thought they'd meet the chance to live a better life. It is an extraordinary sacrifice for them and for their families. But we shouldn't be surprised that they're willing to make it. That's who we are as Americans. That's what we do.

Tomorrow I will travel to West Point and speak to America's newest class of military officers to discuss how Afghanistan fits into our broader strategy going forward. And I am confident that if we carry out this approach, we can not only responsibly end our war in Afghanistan and achieve the objectives that took us to war in the first place, we'll also be able to begin a new chapter in the story of American leadership around the world.

Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, commander, International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan; U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan James B. Cunningham; and Afghan Presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai.

Remarks at the White House Science Fair
May 27, 2014

The President. Welcome to the White House Science Fair! I love this event. [*Laughter*] This is one of my favorite things all year long.

Before I begin, I want to recognize some people who are here today who really worked hard not only to make our Science Fair happen, but are working hard to connect young people to science every single day. We've got our Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan is here. We have our head of NASA and former astronaut, Charlie Bolden is here. There he is. We have our Director of the National Institutes of Health, Francis Collins is here. My chief Science Adviser, John Holdren, is here.

We've got Bill Nye, the Science Guy. You can see his bow tie. He's right here. Love Bill Nye, the Science Guy. [*Applause*] You guys like him, huh? [*Laughter*] You see, you got a big "whoop." [*Laughter*] And we've got a woman who gets to build and blow stuff up for a living at MythBusters: Kari Byron is here. Where's Kari? There she is right there.

And we want to recognize the people whose love and support helped these amazing young people get here: the parents, mentors, tireless teachers. Let's give them all a big round of applause. [*Applause*] Yay!

Now, I have a confession to make. When I was growing up, my science fair projects were

not as successful as the ones here. [*Laughter*] One year, I accidently killed some plants that were a part of my experiment. [*Laughter*] Another time, a bunch of mice escaped in my grandmother's apartment. [*Laughter*] These experiments did not take me straight to the White House. [*Laughter*]

And instead, I have a chance now to see what real young scientists can do. And they were just amazing. And by the way, there were no rodents loose in the White House. [*Laughter*] I couldn't even imagine doing some of the work that the young people I had a chance to meet were doing when I was their age, and your generation of young people is learning more than people in some ages ever did. And our job is to make sure that you've got everything you need to continue on this path of discovery and experimentation and innovation that has been the hallmark not only of human progress, but also the hallmark of American progress. And that's why we decided to organize these science fairs.

Last week, we had the Super Bowl Champion Seattle Seahawks here. They came by the White House. And that was cool. And there's a tradition that when the NBA champions or the NFL champions or college football champions, if they win a championship, they get a chance to come and get highlighted in the White House and take a picture with the President.

But I believe that what's being done by these amazing young people who I had a chance to meet is even more important. And I'm a big sports fan; everybody knows that. But what's happening here is more important. As a society, we have to celebrate outstanding work by young people in science at least as much as we do Super Bowl winners.

Because superstar biologists and engineers and rocket scientists and robot builders, they don't always get the attention that they deserve, but they're what's going to transform our society. They're the folks who are going to come up with cures for diseases and new sources of energy and help us build healthier, more successful societies. And I want to make sure that every young people across America knows what their peers are doing to inspire even more work in science.

That's what this White House Science Fair is all about. And this year, we're putting special emphasis and special focus on all the amazing girls and young women who are excelling at science and technology and engineering and math. And I met some amazing young ladies here today.

So a lot of the young people who I met, they started off trying to solve a problem that they saw in their neighborhoods or at their school. But the solutions they're coming up with have the potential to solve problems all around the world.

So we have the all-girls app team from Resaca Middle School in Los Fresnos, Texas. Where are they? I just saw them. There they are. [*Applause*] There they are. So one of their classmates—an outstanding young man, Andres Salas—is visually impaired. So they designed an app to help him navigate their school and other buildings.

The app tells Andres where he is, where he may need to go, can give him directions, which saves Andres a huge amount of time because, they were explaining—Andres was explaining how if he goes from middle school to high school, he's got to essentially memorize and track his surroundings, and this app is helping him do that. And so not only do these young ladies have big brains, but they've also got big hearts.

When Maria Hanes thought about entering the science fair her senior year in high school, she wanted to work on a project on something she loves. She loves football more than anything else. She's from Oklahoma, so as you might imagine, the Sooners are big in her mind. And she also recognized, though, that a lot of players are suffering from the concussions that come from collisions, so—and she also happened to manage her high school football team.

She dropped her cell phone one day—like most teenagers, she loves her cell phone more than anything—[*laughter*]—including probably her parents at this stage—[*laughter*]—although I know that she'll grow out of that. She

noticed, her rubber case protected her phone. She wondered what kinds of stuff are covering football helmets. And that's how her "Concussion Cushion" was born. And that's the kind of idea that we're going to be talking about this Thursday, when we actually have parents, kids, and pro athletes come to the White House for a Healthy Kids and Safe Sports Concussion Summit.

Peyton Robertson is here. First of all, but where is—I want to make sure I acknowledge Maria. Where is Maria? There she is. Stand up, Maria, so everybody can see you. All right.

Now, we've got Peyton Robertson, who's here from Pine Crest School of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I would just advise people—I can't do this because I've got a conflict of interest—if you can buy stock in Peyton, you should do so now. [*Laughter*] He actually had two projects here, both patented or patents pending.

You say you're 12?

Science Fair participant Peyton Robertson. I am.

The President. "I am"—yes. [*Laughter*] So this guy is something. [*Laughter*] When Hurricane Wilma hit nearly 9 years ago, Peyton took cover in the closet and played Monopoly with his mom and later said, "It's a lot easier to win when your parents are distracted by a category 3 storm." [*Laughter*] That is a good point. You were just buying Boardwalk and—[*laughter*]—they didn't care, whatever. [*Laughter*]

After the storm, Peyton started thinking about the ways people prepare for floods. And he noticed that sandbags are heavy and sometimes they leak. So Peyton designed new, reusable sandbags, using polymers, that, when wet, expand to prevent saltwater from seeping in, and when they dry out, they weigh just 4 pounds. Now, this is just one of his projects. He had another project about retractable training wheels so dad doesn't have to get out the screwdriver. [*Laughter*] But it just gives you a sense of the kind of inquisitiveness and ingenuity that a young man like Peyton has. So give Peyton a big round of applause. [*Applause*] Way to go, Peyton.

And then there is Olivia Van Amsterdam and Katelyn Sweeney, representing their team from Natick High School in Massachusetts. Where are they? Where did they go? There they are. Stand up. They learned that diving for a missing person can be dangerous and a time-consuming process, particularly up in Massachusetts where it gets cold and there's often ice over the water. So they worked to develop a robot that could help firefighters and ice rescue teams search for objects and bodies in perilous waters.

So they built the robot. But here's the other reason that I admire the two of them: When they're not busy building lifesaving robots, they are also establishing an all-girls robotics team. And one is about to graduate. The other is a junior. They're already helping other young women get involved in science and technology, engineering and math. And we are very, very proud of them. So give them a big round of applause.

Every one of the young people that I met here were amazing. And it reminds us that there's so much talent to be tapped if we're working together and lifting it up. Fewer than—right now fewer than one in five bachelor's degrees in engineering or computer science are earned by women. Fewer than 3 in 10 workers in science and engineering are women. That means we've got half the field—or half our team we're not even putting on the field. We've got to change those numbers. These are the fields of the future. This is where the good jobs are going to be. And I want America to be home for those jobs.

And that's why, 3 years ago, I called for a national effort to train a hundred thousand excellent STEM teachers over the next decade. We are now making progress on that front. Today I'm announcing a new $35 million competition to train some of our best math and science graduates to become teachers and fill more of our classrooms with the hands-on science that we see here today, even when their school districts can't afford a lot of fancy equipment. We're also going to expand STEM AmeriCorps to provide learning opportunities for 18,000 low-income students this summer.

And companies, nonprofits, cities—they're doing their part. Today, dozens of them are stepping up with new commitments to inspire and help more students learn. So seven cities are partnering with more than 200 businesses and nonprofits to connect girls and low-income students with mentors in science and technology. Esri is giving every school in America the chance to use its scientific software for free. And we're grateful for that. Khan Academy is partnering with NASA to make lessons about the math and science going on relative to the Mars Project open and accessible to millions of learners worldwide. And a lot of private sector leaders are involved in these efforts and have come here today, probably to recruit—[*laughter*]—folks like Peyton, giving him a card and saying, here, in 6 years, come call me. [*Laughter*]

So we're blessed to live in a country filled with bright, eager young people who love science, love tinkering, love making things, who have the ability to see old problems and grand challenges with fresh eyes. And those of us who are grownups have an obligation to help them reach their full potential, just as others helped us.

It was Franklin Roosevelt who said, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." And as President, that's what inspires me. That's what gets me up every day. And that's why I'm going to keep on—for every day that I'm in this office, that I have the privilege of being President, I'm going to make sure that my focus is on how we're building up the youth of tomorrow so that they can succeed and, as a consequence, America can succeed.

To all the young people that I met—just—I mean, I'm just looking at them. I want to kind of actually talk about all of them. You've got the young lady here who was diagnosed with cancer at the age of 12 and figured out, with the help of the surgeon, a better understanding of how to isolate the genetic mutations that impact her cancer. She's going to be going to Harvard, as you might imagine. [*Laughter*]

You got this guy right here who is designing a new computer system that might allow us to develop flu vaccines faster and more efficiently. He's going to Harvard. [*Laughter*]

You got this guy who won, like, a coding competition for STEM education, and he just started high school. So I don't know, he'll go to MIT or someplace. [*Laughter*]

And then we've got the Girl Scout troop here from Oklahoma who—stand up, girls. [*Laughter*] These guys did their own coding to design a Lego system that shows how, if water is rising too fast on a bridge, potentially, the bridge would go up right away and save lives and save the bridge. And they're in second grade. [*Laughter*] So I was just learning how to put up a tent. [*Laughter*] They're designing bridge stuff to save people. So we're very proud of them. Give them a big round of applause. Yes!

Let's see. Now that I'm at it, I'm not going to leave anybody out. Who else did I miss? We've got this crew that had a simulated catapult that did outstanding work. These two folks in the blue shirts are designing a sensor system to save pedestrians, and they are actually doing it jointly with kids in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, because they want to spread their knowledge, not just restrict it to here in the United States.

We've got our team from Chicago doing some outstanding robotic work. We've got a young lady from—was it San Antonio?—San Antonio, Texas, who's doing the great work with electronic vehicles, and she actually sat in it.

And I think those are all the folks—did I miss anybody who I saw, who I had a chance to see? Because I know that we've got other contestants, including the folks back here.

Anyway, I wanted to let you know how proud and impressed I was with all of you. Not only are you great scientists and engineers and tinkerers, but you also gave outstanding presentations to the President of the United States. And so not only are your parents very proud of you, and your teachers and your mentors, I'm very proud of you as well.

Thank you, everybody. This was a great day. Good luck. Great event.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:13 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his re-

marks, he referred to William S. Nye, television personality and executive director of the Planetary Society; Kari Byron, host of the Discovery Channel program Mythbusters; White House Science Fair participants Cassandra Baquero, Caitlin Gonzolez, and Janessa Leija of Los Fresnos, TX, Maria Hanes of Santa Cruz, CA, Peyton Robertson of Fort Lauderdale, FL, Katelyn Sweeney and Olivia Van Amsterdam of Natick, MA, Elana Simon of New York City, Eric Chen of San Diego, CA, Nicolas Badila of Jonesboro, GA, Avery Dodson, Natalie Hurley, Miriam Schaffer, Claire Winton, and Lucy C. Sharp of Tulsa, OK, Brook Bohn, Daisjaughn Bass, and Gerry McManus of Hudson, MA, Felege Gebru and Karen Fan of Newton, MA, Lydia Wolfe and John Moore of Chicago, IL, and Deidre Carrillo of San Antonio, TX; and Shannon Robertson, mother of Peyton Robertson.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Ending Immunities Granted to the Development Fund for Iraq and Certain Other Iraqi Property and Interests in Property Pursuant to Executive Order 13303, as Amended

May 27, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") terminating the prohibitions contained in section 1 of Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, as amended by Executive Order 13364 of November 29, 2004, on any attachment, judgment, decree, lien, execution, garnishment, or other judicial process with respect to the Development Fund for Iraq and Iraqi petroleum, petroleum products, and interests therein, and the accounts, assets, investments, and other property owned by, belonging to, or held by, in the name of, on behalf of, or otherwise for, the Central Bank of Iraq.

I have taken this action as a result of my determination that the situation that gave rise to the actions taken in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, to protect the Development Fund for Iraq and certain other property in which the Government of Iraq has an interest has been significantly altered, including through the Government of Iraq's progress in resolving and managing the risk associated with outstanding debts and claims arising from actions of the previous regime. This action is not intended otherwise to affect the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, as expanded in scope by Executive Order 13315 of August 28, 2003, which shall remain in place. This action is also not intended to affect immunities enjoyed by the Government of Iraq and its property under otherwise applicable law.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and section 5 of the United Nations Participation Act, as amended (22 U.S.C. 287c), as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. TheExecutive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York
May 28, 2014

Thank you. And thank you, General Caslen, for that introduction. To General Trainor, General Clarke, the faculty and staff at West Point: You have been outstanding stewards of this proud institution and outstanding mentors for the newest officers in the United States Army. I'd like to acknowledge the Army's leadership: General McHugh—Secretary McHugh, General Odierno, as well as Senator Jack Reed, who is here, and a proud graduate of West Point himself.

To the class of 2014, I congratulate you on taking your place on the Long Gray Line. Among you is the first all-female command team, Erin Mauldin and Austen Boroff. In Calla Glavin, you have a Rhodes Scholar. And Josh Herbeck proves that West Point accuracy extends beyond the three-point line. To the entire class, let me reassure you in these final hours at West Point: As Commander in Chief, I hereby absolve all cadets who are on restriction for minor conduct offenses. [*Laughter*] Let me just add that nobody ever did that for me when I was in school. [*Laughter*]

I know you join me in extending a word of thanks to your families. Joe DeMoss, whose son James is graduating, spoke for a whole lot of parents when he wrote me a letter about the sacrifices you've made. "Deep inside," he wrote, "we want to explode with pride at what they are committing to do in the service of our country." Like several graduates, James is a combat veteran. And I would ask all of us here today to stand and pay tribute, not only to the veterans among us, but to the more than 2.5 million Americans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as their families.

This is a particularly useful time for America to reflect on those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom, a few days after Memorial Day. You are the first class to graduate since 9/11 who may not be sent into combat in Iraq or Afghanistan. [*Applause*] When I first spoke at West Point in 2009, we still had more than a hundred thousand troops in Iraq. We were preparing to surge in Afghanistan. Our counterterrorism efforts were focused on Al Qaida's core leadership, those who had carried out the 9/11 attacks. And our Nation was just beginning a long climb out of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Four and a half years later, as you graduate, the landscape has changed. We have removed our troops from Iraq. We are winding down our war in Afghanistan. Al Qaida's leadership on the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been decimated, and Usama bin Laden is no more. And through it all, we've refocused our investments in what has always been a key source of American strength: a growing economy that can provide opportunity for everybody who's willing to work hard and take responsibility here at home.

In fact, by most measures, America has rarely been stronger relative to the rest of the world. Those who argue otherwise, who suggest that America is in decline or has seen its global leadership slip away, are either misreading history or engaged in partisan politics. Think about it. Our military has no peer. The odds of a direct threat against us by any nation are low and do not come close to the dangers we faced during the cold war.

Meanwhile, our economy remains the most dynamic on Earth, our businesses the most innovative. Each year, we grow more energy independent. From Europe to Asia, we are the hub of alliances unrivaled in the history of nations. America continues to attract striving immigrants. The values of our founding inspire leaders in parliaments and new movements in public squares around the globe. And when a typhoon hits the Philippines or schoolgirls are kidnapped in Nigeria or masked men occupy a building in Ukraine, it is America that the world looks to for help. So the United States is and remains the one indispensable nation. That has been true for the century passed, and it will be true for the century to come.

But the world is changing with accelerating speed. This presents opportunity, but also new dangers. We know all too well, after 9/11, just how technology and globalization has put power once reserved for states in the hands of individuals, raising the capacity of terrorists to do harm. Russia's aggression towards former Soviet states unnerves capitals in Europe, while China's economic rise and military reach worries its neighbors. From Brazil to India, rising middle classes compete with us, and governments seek a greater say in global forums. And even as developing nations embrace democracy and market economies, 24-hour news and social media makes it impossible to ignore the continuation of sectarian conflicts and failing states and popular uprisings that might have received only passing notice a generation ago.

It will be your generation's task to respond to this new world. The question we face, the question each of you will face, is not whether America will lead, but how we will lead, not just to secure our peace and prosperity, but also extend peace and prosperity around the globe.

Now, this question isn't new. At least since George Washington served as Commander in Chief, there have been those who warned against foreign entanglements that do not touch directly on our security or economic well-being. Today, according to self-described realists, conflicts in Syria or Ukraine or the Central African Republic are not ours to solve. And not surprisingly, after costly wars and continuing challenges here at home, that view is shared by many Americans.

A different view from interventionists from the left and the right says that we ignore these conflicts at our own peril; that America's willingness to apply force around the world is the ultimate safeguard against chaos and America's failure to act in the face of Syrian brutality or Russian provocations not only violates our conscience, but invites escalating aggression in the future.

And each side can point to history to support its claims. But I believe neither view fully speaks to the demands of this moment. It is absolutely true that in the 21st century American isolationism is not an option. We don't have a choice to ignore what happens beyond our borders. If nuclear materials are not secure, that poses a danger to American cities. As the Syrian civil war spills across borders, the capacity of battle-hardened extremist groups to come after us only increases. Regional aggression that goes unchecked, whether in southern Ukraine or the South China Sea or anywhere else in the world, will ultimately impact our allies and could draw in our military. We can't ignore what happens beyond our boundaries.

And beyond these narrow rationales, I believe we have a real stake, abiding self-interest, in making sure our children and our grandchildren grow up in a world where schoolgirls are not kidnapped and where individuals are not slaughtered because of tribe or faith or political belief. I believe that a world of greater freedom and tolerance is not only a moral imperative, it also helps to keep us safe.

But to say that we have an interest in pursuing peace and freedom beyond our borders is not to say that every problem has a military solution. Since World War II, some of our most costly mistakes came not from our restraint, but from our willingness to rush into military adventures without thinking through the consequences, without building international support and legitimacy for our action, without leveling with the American people about the sacrifices required. Tough talk often draws headlines, but war rarely conforms to slogans. As General Eisenhower, someone with hard-earned knowledge on this subject, said at this ceremony in 1947, "War is mankind's most tragic and stupid folly; to seek or advise its deliberate provocation is a black crime against all men."

Like Eisenhower, this generation of men and women in uniform know all too well the wages of war, and that includes those of you here at West Point. Four of the servicemembers who stood in the audience when I announced the surge of our forces in Afghanistan gave their lives in that effort. A lot more were wounded. I believe America's security demanded those deployments. But I am haunted by those deaths. I am haunted by those

wounds. And I would betray my duty to you and to the country we love if I ever sent you into harm's way simply because I saw a problem somewhere in the world that needed to be fixed or because I was worried about critics who think military intervention is the only way for America to avoid looking weak.

Here's my bottom line: America must always lead on the world stage. If we don't, no one else will. The military that you have joined is and always will be the backbone of that leadership. But U.S. military action cannot be the only—or even primary—component of our leadership in every instance. Just because we have the best hammer does not mean that every problem is a nail. And because the costs associated with military action are so high, you should expect every civilian leader—and especially your Commander in Chief—to be clear about how that awesome power should be used.

So let me spend the rest of my time describing my vision for how the United States of America and our military should lead in the years to come, for you will be part of that leadership.

First, let me repeat a principle I put forward at the outset of my Presidency. The United States will use military force, unilaterally if necessary, when our core interests demand it: when our people are threatened, when our livelihoods are at stake, when the security of our allies is in danger. In these circumstances, we still need to ask tough questions about whether our actions are proportional and effective and just. International opinion matters, but America should never ask permission to protect our people, our homeland, or our way of life.

On the other hand, when issues of global concern do not pose a direct threat to the United States, when such issues are at stake—when crises arise that stir our conscience or push the world in a more dangerous direction, but do not directly threaten us—then the threshold for military action must be higher. In such circumstances, we should not go it alone. Instead, we must mobilize allies and partners to take collective action. We have to broaden our tools to include diplomacy and development; sanctions and isolation; appeals to international law; and if just, necessary, and effective, multilateral military action. In such circumstances, we have to work with others because collective action in these circumstances is more likely to succeed, more likely to be sustained, less likely to lead to costly mistakes.

And this leads to my second point: For the foreseeable future, the most direct threat to America at home and abroad remains terrorism. But a strategy that involves invading every country that harbors terrorist networks is naive and unsustainable. I believe we must shift our counterterrorism strategy—drawing on the successes and shortcomings of our experience in Iraq and Afghanistan—to more effectively partner with countries where terrorist networks seek a foothold.

And the need for a new strategy reflects the fact that today's principal threat no longer comes from a centralized Al Qaida leadership. Instead, it comes from decentralized Al Qaida affiliates and extremists, many with agendas focused in countries where they operate. And this lessens the possibility of large-scale 9/11-style attacks against the homeland, but it heightens the danger of U.S. personnel overseas being attacked, as we saw in Benghazi. It heightens the danger to less defensible targets, as we saw in a shopping mall in Nairobi.

So we have to develop a strategy that matches this diffuse threat, one that expands our reach without sending forces that stretch our military too thin or stir up local resentments. We need partners to fight terrorists alongside us. And empowering partners is a large part of what we have done and what we are currently doing in Afghanistan.

Together with our allies, America struck huge blows against Al Qaida core and pushed back against an insurgency that threatened to overrun the country. But sustaining this progress depends on the ability of Afghans to do the job. And that's why we trained hundreds of thousands of Afghan soldiers and police. Earlier this spring, those forces, those Afghan forces, secured an election in which Afghans voted for the first democratic transfer of power in

their history. And at the end of this year, a new Afghan President will be in office and America's combat mission will be over.

Now, that was an enormous achievement made because of America's Armed Forces. But as we move to a train-and-advise mission in Afghanistan, our reduced presence there allows us to more effectively address emerging threats in the Middle East and North Africa. So earlier this year, I asked my national security team to develop a plan for a network of partnerships from South Asia to the Sahel. Today, as part of this effort, I am calling on Congress to support a new counterterrorism partnerships fund of up to $5 billion, which will allow us to train, build capacity, and facilitate partner countries on the front lines. And these resources will give us flexibility for fulfill different missions, including training security forces in Yemen who have gone on the offensive against Al Qaida, supporting a multinational force to keep the peace in Somalia, working with European allies to train a functioning security force and border patrol in Libya, and facilitating French operations in Mali.

A critical focus of this effort will be the ongoing crisis in Syria. As frustrating as it is, there are no easy answers there, no military solution that can eliminate the terrible suffering anytime soon. As President, I made a decision that we should not put American troops into the middle of this increasingly sectarian war, and I believe that is the right decision. But that does not mean we shouldn't help the Syrian people stand up against a dictator who bombs and starves his own people. And in helping those who fight for the right of all Syrians to choose their own future, we are also pushing back against the growing number of extremists who find safe haven in the chaos.

So with the additional resources I'm announcing today, we will step up our efforts to support Syria's neighbors—Jordan and Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq—as they contend with refugees and confront terrorists working across Syria's borders. I will work with Congress to ramp up support for those in the Syrian opposition who offer the best alternative to terrorists and brutal dictators. And we will continue to coordinate with our friends and allies in Europe and the Arab world to push for a political resolution of this crisis and to make sure that those countries and not just the United States are contributing their fair share to support the Syrian people.

Let me make one final point about our efforts against terrorism. The partnerships I've described do not eliminate the need to take direct action when necessary to protect ourselves. When we have actionable intelligence, that's what we do, through capture operations, like the one that brought a terrorist involved in the plot to bomb our Embassies in 1998 to face justice, or drone strikes, like those we've carried out in Yemen and Somalia. There are times when those actions are necessary, and we cannot hesitate to protect our people.

But as I said last year, in taking direct action, we must uphold standards that reflect our values. That means taking strikes only when we face a continuing, imminent threat, and only where there is no certainty—that there is near certainty of no civilian casualties. For our actions should meet a simple test: We must not create more enemies than we take off the battlefield.

I also believe we must be more transparent about both the basis of our counterterrorism actions and the manner in which they are carried out. We have to be able to explain them publicly, whether it is drone strikes or training partners. I will increasingly turn to our military to take the lead and provide information to the public about our efforts. Our intelligence community has done outstanding work, and we have to continue to protect sources and methods. But when we cannot explain our efforts clearly and publicly, we face terrorist propaganda and international suspicion, we erode legitimacy with our partners and our people, and we reduce accountability in our own Government.

And this issue of transparency is directly relevant to a third aspect of American leadership, and that is our effort to strengthen and enforce international order. After World War II, America had the wisdom to shape institutions to keep the peace and support human progress,

from NATO and the United Nations to the World Bank and IMF. These institutions are not perfect, but they have been a force multiplier. They reduce the need for unilateral American action and increase restraint among other nations.

Now, just as the world has changed, this architecture must change as well. At the height of the cold war, President Kennedy spoke about the need for a peace based upon "a gradual evolution in human institutions." And evolving these international institutions to meet the demands of today must be a critical part of American leadership.

Now, there are a lot of folks, a lot of skeptics, who often downplay the effectiveness of multilateral action. For them, working through international institutions like the U.N. or respecting international law is a sign of weakness. I think they're wrong. Let me offer just two examples why.

In Ukraine, Russia's recent actions recalled the days when Soviet tanks rolled into Eastern Europe. But this isn't the cold war. Our ability to shape world opinion helped isolate Russia right away. Because of American leadership, the world immediately condemned Russian actions, Europe and the G–7 joined us to impose sanctions, NATO reinforced our commitment to Eastern European allies, the IMF is helping to stabilize Ukraine's economy, OSCE monitors brought the eyes of the world to unstable parts of Ukraine. And this mobilization of world opinion and international institutions served as a counterweight to Russian propaganda and Russian troops on the border and armed militias in ski masks.

This weekend, Ukrainians voted by the millions. Yesterday I spoke to their next President. We don't know how the situation will play out, and there will remain grave challenges ahead, but standing with our allies on behalf of international order, working with international institutions, has given a chance for the Ukrainian people to choose their future without us firing a shot.

Similarly, despite frequent warnings from the United States and Israel and others, the Iranian nuclear program steadily advanced for years. But at the beginning of my Presidency, we built a coalition that imposed sanctions on the Iranian economy, while extending the hand of diplomacy to the Iranian Government. And now we have an opportunity to resolve our differences peacefully.

The odds of success are still long, and we reserve all options to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. But for the first time in a decade, we have a very real chance of achieving a breakthrough agreement, one that is more effective and durable than what we could have achieved through the use of force. And throughout these negotiations, it has been our willingness to work through multilateral channels that kept the world on our side.

The point is, this is American leadership. This is American strength. In each case, we built coalitions to respond to a specific challenge. And now we need to do more to strengthen the institutions that can anticipate and prevent problems from spreading. For example, NATO is the strongest alliance the world has ever known. But we're now working with NATO allies to meet new missions, both within Europe where our Eastern allies must be reassured, but also beyond Europe's borders, where our NATO allies must pull their weight to counterterrorism and respond to failed states and train a network of partners.

Likewise, the U.N. provides a platform to keep the peace in states torn apart by conflict. Now we need to make sure that those nations who provide peacekeepers have the training and equipment to actually keep the peace so that we can prevent the type of killing we've seen in Congo and Sudan. We are going to deepen our investment in countries that support these peacekeeping missions, because having other nations maintain order in their own neighborhoods lessens the need for us to put our own troops in harm's way. It's a smart investment. It's the right way to lead.

Keep in mind, not all international norms relate directly to armed conflict. We have a serious problem with cyber attacks, which is why we're working to shape and enforce rules of the road to secure our networks and our citizens. In the Asia-Pacific, we're supporting

Southeast Asian nations as they negotiate a code of conduct with China on maritime disputes in the South China Sea. And we're working to resolve these disputes through international law. That spirit of cooperation needs to energize the global effort to combat climate change, a creeping national security crisis that will help shape your time in uniform, as we are called on to respond to refugee flows and natural disasters and conflicts over water and food, which is why next year, I intend to make sure America is out front in putting together a global framework to preserve our planet.

You see, American influence is always stronger when we lead by example. We can't exempt ourselves from the rules that apply to everybody else. We can't call on others to make commitments to combat climate change if a whole lot of our political leaders deny that it's taken place. We can't try to resolve problems in the South China Sea when we have refused to make sure that the Law of the Sea Convention is ratified by our United States Senate, despite the fact that our top military leaders say the treaty advances our national security. That's not leadership, that's retreat. That's not strength, that's weakness. It would be utterly foreign to leaders like Roosevelt and Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy.

I believe in American exceptionalism with every fiber of my being. But what makes us exceptional is not our ability to flout international norms and the rule of law, it is our willingness to affirm them through our actions. And that's why I will continue to push to close Gitmo, because American values and legal traditions do not permit the indefinite detention of people beyond our borders. That's why we're putting in place new restrictions on how America collects and uses intelligence, because we will have fewer partners and be less effective if a perception takes hold that we're conducting surveillance against ordinary citizens. America does not simply stand for stability or the absence of conflict, no matter what the cost. We stand for the more lasting peace that can only come through opportunity and freedom for people everywhere.

Which brings me to the fourth and final element of American leadership: our willingness to act on behalf of human dignity. America's support for democracy and human rights goes beyond idealism; it is a matter of national security. Democracies are our closest friends and are far less likely to go to war. Economies based on free and open markets perform better and become markets for our goods. Respect for human rights is an antidote to instability and the grievances that fuel violence and terror.

A new century has brought no end to tyranny. In capitals around the globe—including, unfortunately, some of America's partners—there has been a crackdown on civil society. The cancer of corruption has enriched too many governments and their cronies and enraged citizens from remote villages to iconic squares. And watching these trends or the violent upheavals in parts of the Arab world, it's easy to be cynical.

But remember that because of America's efforts, because of American diplomacy and foreign assistance as well as the sacrifices of our military, more people live under elected governments today than at any time in human history. Technology is empowering civil society in ways that no iron fist can control. New breakthroughs are lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. And even the upheaval of the Arab world reflects the rejection of an authoritarian order that was anything but stable and now offers the long-term prospect of more responsive and effective governance.

In countries like Egypt, we acknowledge that our relationship is anchored in security interests, from peace treaties to Israel to shared efforts against violent extremism. So we have not cut off cooperation with the new Government, but we can and will persistently press for reforms that the Egyptian people have demanded.

And meanwhile, look at a country like Burma, which only a few years ago was an intractable dictatorship and hostile to the United States: 40 million people. Thanks to the enormous courage of the people in that country, and because we took the diplomatic initiative,

American leadership, we have seen political reforms opening a once-closed society, a movement by Burmese leadership away from partnership with North Korea in favor of engagement with America and our allies. We're now supporting reform and badly needed national reconciliation through assistance and investment, through coaxing and, at times, public criticism. And progress there could be reversed, but if Burma succeeds, we will have gained a new partner without having fired a shot. American leadership.

In each of these cases, we should not expect change to happen overnight. That's why we form alliances not just with governments, but also with ordinary people. For unlike other nations, America is not afraid of individual empowerment, we are strengthened by it. We're strengthened by civil society. We're strengthened by a free press. We're strengthened by striving entrepreneurs and small businesses. We're strengthened by educational exchange and opportunity for all people and women and girls. That's who we are. That's what we represent.

I saw that through a trip to Africa last year, where American assistance has made possible the prospect of an AIDS-free generation, while helping Africans care themselves for their sick. We're helping farmers get their products to market, to feed populations once endangered by famine. We aim to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa so people are connected to the promise of the global economy. And all this creates new partners and shrinks the space for terrorism and conflict.

Now, tragically, no American security operation can eradicate the threat posed by an extremist group like Boko Haram, the group that kidnapped those girls. And that's why we have to focus not just on rescuing those girls right away, but also on supporting Nigerian efforts to educate its youth. This should be one of the hard-earned lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan, where our military became the strongest advocate for diplomacy and development. They understood that foreign assistance is not an afterthought, something nice to do apart from our national defense, apart from our national security. It is part of what makes us strong.

Ultimately, global leadership requires us to see the world as it is, with all its danger and uncertainty. We have to be prepared for the worst, prepared for every contingency. But American leadership also requires us to see the world as it should be: a place where the aspirations of individual human beings really matters, where hopes and not just fears govern, where the truths written into our founding documents can steer the currents of history in a direction of justice. And we cannot do that without you.

Class of 2014, you have taken this time to prepare on the quiet banks of the Hudson. You leave this place to carry forward a legacy that no other military in human history can claim. You do so as part of a team that extends beyond your units or even our Armed Forces, for in the course of your service, you will work as a team with diplomats and development experts. You'll get to know allies and train partners. And you will embody what it means for America to lead the world.

Next week, I will go to Normandy to honor the men who stormed the beaches there. And while it's hard for many Americans to comprehend the courage and sense of duty that guided those who boarded small ships, it's familiar to you. At West Point, you define what it means to be a patriot.

Three years ago, Gavin White graduated from this academy. He then served in Afghanistan. Like the soldiers who came before him, Gavin was in a foreign land, helping people he'd never met, putting himself in harm's way for the sake of his community and his family, of the folks back home. Gavin lost one of his legs in an attack. I met him last year at Walter Reed. He was wounded, but just as determined as the day that he arrived here at West Point, and he developed a simple goal. Today his sister Morgan will graduate. And true to his promise, Gavin will be there to stand and exchange salutes with her.

We have been through a long season of war. We have faced trials that were not foreseen, and we've seen divisions about how to move

forward. But there is something in Gavin's character—there is something in the American character—that will always triumph. Leaving here, you carry with you the respect of your fellow citizens. You will represent a nation with history and hope on our side. Your charge now is not only to protect our country, but to do what is right and just. As your Commander in Chief, I know you will.

May God bless you, may God bless our men and women in uniform, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in Michie Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, Jr., USA, Superintendent, Brig. Gen. Timothy E. Trainor, USA, Dean of the Academic Board, and Brig. Gen. Richard D. Clarke, USA, Commandant of the U.S. Corps of Cadets, U.S. Military Academy; Josh Herbeck, guard, Army West Point men's basketball team; Palm Harbor, FL, resident Joe DeMoss, father of 2014 cadet James DeMoss; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; and President-elect Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine.

Statement on the Death of Maya Angelou
May 28, 2014

When her friend Nelson Mandela passed away last year, Maya Angelou wrote that "No sun outlasts its sunset, but will rise again, and bring the dawn."

Today Michelle and I join millions around the world in remembering one of the brightest lights of our time: a brilliant writer, a fierce friend, and a truly phenomenal woman. Over the course of her remarkable life, Maya was many things: an author, poet, civil rights activist, playwright, actress, director, composer, singer, and dancer. But above all, she was a storyteller, and her greatest stories were true. A childhood of suffering and abuse actually drove her to stop speaking, but the voice she found helped generations of Americans find their rainbow amidst the clouds and inspired the rest of us to be our best selves. In fact, she inspired my own mother to name my sister Maya.

Like so many others, Michelle and I will always cherish the time we were privileged to spend with Maya. With a kind word and a strong embrace, she had the ability to remind us that we are all God's children, that we all have something to offer. And while Maya's day may be done, we take comfort in knowing that her song will continue, "flung up to heaven," and we celebrate the dawn that Maya Angelou helped bring.

NOTE: The statement referred to the President's sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Remarks at the White House Healthy Kids and Safe Sports Concussion Summit
May 29, 2014

As a dad, when you—Tori's parents are here. And I have to imagine, they are awfully proud of this remarkable young lady, and we really appreciate you taking the time to introduce me.

I want to welcome everybody here to the White House. I want to thank Members of Congress who are here. We've got leaders from America's sports and medical communities, especially young people here like Tori, who did such a great job sharing her story today.

All across the country, there are millions of young athletes just like Tori who spend their weekends and summers on baseball diamonds and soccer pitches. And they put in extra practice so they can make the varsity or maybe even earn a college scholarship. Most of them are not as good as Tori was at her sport. I certainly wasn't, although I had the same

enthusiasm. And for so many of our kids, sports aren't just something they do; they're part of their identity. They may be budding scientists or entrepreneurs or writers, but they're also strikers and linebackers and point guards. And that's a good thing.

First of all, the First Lady thinks everybody needs to move. [*Laughter*] And obviously, there's a huge public health interest in making sure that people are participating in sports. But sports is also just fundamental to who we are as Americans and our culture. We're competitive. We're driven. And sports teaches us about teamwork and hard work and what it takes to succeed not just on the field, but in life.

And I was a basketball player, as I said, not as good as Tori was at soccer. But I learned so many lessons playing sports that I carry on to this day, even to the Presidency. And still, when I need to relax and clear my head, I turn to sports, whether it's a pickup basketball game—and I'm much slower than I was just last week—[*laughter*]—or more sedate pastimes like golf or watching SportsCenter.

And more than that, as a parent, Michelle and I have always encouraged our girls to play sports. One of the greatest transformations, I think, in our society has been how young women have been finally given the opportunity because of title IX. And now you see just unbelievable women athletes who are getting the same exposure and experience and outlets for sports all across the country. And Malia and Sasha are part of that generation. They take for granted, of course, we're playing sports. And they played everything from soccer to basketball and tennis and track. So sports are important to our life as a family, just like they are for families all across the country.

The reason we're here today, though, is, all across the country, parents are also having a more troubling conversation, and that's about the risks of concussions. There's a lot of concern, but there's a lot of uncertainty. And as Tori's story suggests, concussions are not just a football issue. They don't just affect grown men who choose to accept some risk to play a game that they love and that they excel at. Every season, you've got boys and girls who are getting concussions in lacrosse and soccer and wrestling and ice hockey, as well as football. And in fact, the Center for Disease Control reports that in the most recent data that's available to us, young people made nearly 250,000 emergency room visits with brain injuries from sports and recreation—250,000. That number obviously doesn't include kids who see their family doctor or, as is typical, don't seek any medical help.

Before the awareness was out there, when I was young and played football briefly, there were a couple of times where I'm sure that that ringing sensation in my head and the need to sit down for a while might have been a mild concussion, and at the time, you didn't think anything of it. The awareness is improved today, but not by much. So the total number of young people who are impacted by this early on is probably bigger than we know.

Now, I say this not to scare people. We want our kids participating in sports. I'd be much more troubled if young people were shying away from sports. As parents, though, we want to keep them safe, and that means we have to have better information. We have to know what these issues are. And the fact is, we don't have solid numbers, and that tells me that at every level, we're all still trying to fully grasp what's going on with this issue.

Last fall, a comprehensive report found that there are too many gaps in the understanding of the effects and treatment for concussions. Researchers are still learning about the causes and consequences of these injuries. Communities are wondering how young it is to start tackle football, for example. Parents are wondering whether their kids are learning the right techniques or wearing the best safety equipment or whether they should sign up for—to have their kids participate in any full-contact sports at all.

We've got some outstanding scientists here today like Francis Collins, the head of NIH. There may be tests that at some point we can do to see if there is a particular susceptibility to concussions. Some people's brains may be more vulnerable to trauma than others are. We don't know that yet, but there may be some evidence that is worth exploring.

So with all of these questions swirling around, as a parent and as a fan, and in discussions with a lot of other parents and fans who happen to be in this White House, we decided, why not use our convening power to help find some more answers? And today we've brought together the president of the NCAA, the MLS commissioner, senior leadership from the NHL and U.S. Soccer and the NFL and the NFL Players Association. We've also got some of the Nation's foremost brain experts. We've got doctors who work with kids every day from all over the country. We've got leaders in Pop Warner and Little League and Under Armour and ESPN participating. And we've got Members of Congress like Joyce Beatty and Tim Bishop and Bill Pascrell, all who have taken a great interest in this.

And because we're all here and are looking for information, even if we may not agree on everything, the one thing we can agree on is, is that sports are vital to this country and it's a responsibility for us to make sure that young, talented kids like Tori are able to participate as safely as possible and that we are doing our job, both as parents and school administrators, coaches, to look after them the way they need to be looked after. That's job number one.

The good news is, across the country, people eagerly signed up to participate here. They've recognized this is an issue that is worth paying attention to. We've seen all 50 States pass laws requiring concussed athletes to get a medical clearance before they return to play. Folks from U.S.A. Hockey banned checking before 12 years old. In March, the NFL donated $45 million to U.S.A. Football for their Heads Up Football program, which emphasizes coach training and player safety.

On our part, this administration—the CDC—has spearheaded a public awareness campaign for parents and athletes and coaches and school staff called Heads Up. And you can check it out at CDC.gov/concussion. That's where we've compiled a lot of the best information available for parents. And while the number of concussions reported among young athletes has risen over the past decade, one reason is likely because players, coaches, and parents better understand symptoms of these injuries.

Still, there's more work to do. We've got to have better research, better data, better safety equipment, better protocols. We've got to have every parent and coach and teacher recognize the signs of concussions. And we need more athletes to understand how important it is to do what we can to prevent injuries and to admit them when they do happen. We have to change a culture that says you suck it up. Identifying a concussion and being able to self-diagnose that this is something that I need to take care of doesn't make you weak, it means you're strong.

At the same time, I want to point out that this is not just a matter for athletes. You'll notice this big guy here, Ray Odierno, who is not only the leader of our Army, but also is somebody who plays football, who—I don't know if he still plays, although he could. [*Laughter*] But as a leader of our Armed Forces, he sees the effects that injuries have had on brave men and women who serve in uniform and all of us who cares about them. That's why Ray is here today.

And I've seen in my visits to wounded warriors, traumatic brain injury is one of the signature issues of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The thing is, the vast majority of mild traumatic brain injury cases in the military occur outside deployment. So even though our wars are ending, addressing this issue will continue to be important to our Armed Forces. And as part of a new national action plan we announced last year, we're directing more than a hundred million dollars in new research to find more effective ways to help prevent, diagnose, and treat mental health conditions and traumatic brain injury, because the more we can learn about the effects of brain injuries, the more we can do to help our courageous troops and veterans recover. And that obviously gives us more information about our kids as well.

Today, by the way, I'm proud to announce a number of new commitments and partnerships from the folks in this room that are going to help us move the ball forward on this issue. The NCAA and the Department of Defense

are teaming up to commit $30 million for concussion education and a study involving up to 37,000 college athletes, which will be the most comprehensive concussion study ever. And our service academies—Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard—are all signed up to support this study in any way that they can.

The NFL is committing $25 million of new funding over the next 3 years to test strategies like creating health and safety forums for parents, and they're building on the program piloted by my own Chicago Bears—[*laughter*]—to get more trainers at high school games. And the NIH is announcing the next step in this partnership with the NFL. They're dedicating $16 million of the NFL's previous donation toward studies and clinical trials to examine the chronic effects of repetitive concussions.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology will invest $5 million over the next 5 years to explore the development of lighter and smarter and more responsive materials for protective equipment. And I want to single out the New York Giants chairman, Steve Tisch, who is here and is donating $10 million of his own money to expand the BrainSPORT Program at UCLA to prevent, study, and treat concussions and traumatic brain injury in youth. So all these new commitments are terrific, and we want to thank everybody here for participating.

So just to wrap up so you can hear from people who actually know what they're talking about, these efforts are going to make a lot of difference for a lot of people, from soldiers on the battlefield to students out on the football field. Take the Levine family from Rockville, Maryland, who are here today. Where did they go? There they are right there. Cheryl and Jason Levine have three boys who, when you look at them, you know right away they're brothers: Isaac, Sidney, and Rueben. They have loved ice hockey since they were really young.

But when he was 7 years old, Sidney suffered a pair of moderate concussions on the ice. A few years later, when Isaac was an eighth grader, he suffered a more severe concussion in a game. After the injury, both boys had headaches. They started struggling in class. They started acting out. Isaac's concussion even kept him out of school for a while. And as you might imagine, Cheryl was horrified. As she put it, "You only have one brain." That's a good point. And you want to make sure that you're treating it right.

Fortunately, with the help of their doctors, both boys' health and behavior improved. And Sidney was back on the ice 10 weeks after his concussion. He's hoping to play varsity next year as a freshman. And last winter, Isaac played forward as his high school team won the State championship.

Now, Cheryl and Jason could have pulled their boys out—it was such a scare—and had their doctors recommended it, that's what they would have done. But they knew that just like millions of kids across the country, kids love their sports. So Cheryl and Jason educated themselves on the issue, and with their doctor's blessing and the support of the coaches and teachers, they're encouraging their boys to lace up those skates and get out on the ice. And as Cheryl said, "My kids aren't going to go on and play in the NHL." But—I hope they know that, by the way. [*Laughter*] "But what I'm worried about is getting through their teens while having fun and building confidence and doing the things they want to do, obviously within certain limits." That's some good parenting by Cheryl.

And that's what today is about. It's to give parents the information they need to help their kids compete safely. Let's keep encouraging our kids to get out there and play sports that they love and doing it the right way. That's not a job just for parents, but it's a job for all of us. And that's why the public-private partnerships like these are important. In a few minutes, I know that many of you are going to take this discussion a step further with this panel of experts moderated by Pam Oliver, which we're very grateful for.

But I want to thank all of you for coming here today, for your contributions to our kids' future. And most of all, I want to thank the young people who are here, particularly Tori, for highlighting why this issue is so important. We're really excited. And by the way, Tori, al-

though is not going to be playing soccer when she goes to college—she's graduating—she does intend to stay involved in the sport and, I understand, is going to be doing some coaching of some 4- and 5-year-olds this summer. And she is going to pass on some of the knowledge, hard-earned knowledge that she's learned. And that's why we know she's going to be a terrific success in whatever she chooses to do.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:19 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Huntingtown, MD, resident Victoria "Tori" Bellucci, and her mother Gigi Bellucci; Mark A. Emmert, president, National Collegiate Athletic Association; Don Garber, commissioner, Major League Soccer; and Pam Oliver, sportscaster and contributing reporter, Fox's "Fox NFL Sunday" program.

Remarks on the Resignation of Eric K. Shinseki as Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Appointment of Sloan D. Gibson as Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs and an Exchange With Reporters

May 30, 2014

The President. Good morning, everybody. A few minutes ago, Secretary Shinseki and Rob Nabors, who I've temporarily assigned to work with the VA, presented me with the Department's initial review of VA facilities nationwide. And what they've found is that the misconduct has not been limited to a few VA facilities, but many across the country. It's totally unacceptable. Our veterans deserve the best. They've earned it. Last week, I said that if we found misconduct, it would be punished. And I meant it.

Secretary Shinseki has now begun the process of firing many of the people responsible, including senior leaders at the Phoenix VA. He's canceled any possible performance bonuses this year for VHA senior executives. And he has ordered the VA to personally contact every veteran in Phoenix waiting for appointments to get them the care that they need and that they deserve.

This morning I think some of you also heard Ric take a truly remarkable action. In public remarks, he took responsibility for the conduct of those facilities and apologized to his fellow veterans and to the American people. And a few minutes ago, Secretary Shinseki offered me his own resignation. With considerable regret, I accepted.

Ric Shinseki has served his country with honor for nearly 50 years. He did two tours of combat in Vietnam. He's a veteran who left a part of himself on the battlefield. He rose to command the First Cavalry Division, served as Army Chief of Staff, and has never been afraid to speak truth to power.

As Secretary of the VA, he presided over record investments in our veterans: enrolling 2 million new veterans in health care; delivering disability pay to more Vietnam veterans exposed to agent orange; making it easier for veterans with posttraumatic stress, mental health issues, and traumatic brain injury to get treatment; improving care for our women veterans. At the same time, he helped reduce veteran homelessness and helped more than 1 million veterans, servicemembers, and their families pursue their education under the post-9/11 GI bill.

So Ric's commitment to our veterans is unquestioned. His service to our country is exemplary. I am grateful for his service, as are many veterans across the country. He has worked hard to investigate and identify the problems with access to care, but as he told me this morning, the VA needs new leadership to address them. He does not want to be a distraction, because his priority is to fix the problem and make sure our vets are getting the care that they need. That was Ric's judgment on behalf of his fellow veterans. And I agree. We don't have time for distractions. We need to fix the problem.

For now, the leader that will help move us forward is Sloan Gibson, who will take on the reins as Acting Secretary. Sloan became Deputy Secretary at the VA just 3 months ago, but he too has devoted his life to serving our country and our veterans. His grandfather fought on the front lines of World War I. His father was a tail-gunner in World War II. Sloan graduated from West Point, earned his Airborne and Ranger qualifications, and served in the infantry. And most recently, he was president and CEO of the USO, which does a remarkable job supporting our men and women at war, their families, our wounded warriors, and families of the fallen.

So all told, Sloan has 20 years of private sector and nonprofit experience that he brings to bear on our ongoing work to build a 21st-century VA. And I'm grateful that he is willing to take on this task.

I met with Sloan after I met with Ric this morning and made it clear that reforms should not wait. They need to proceed immediately. I've also asked Rob Nabors to stay at the VA temporarily to help Sloan and the Department through this transition and to complete his own review of the VHA. In the meantime, we're going to look diligently for a new permanent VA Secretary, and we hope to confirm that successor and fill that post as soon as possible.

Now, we're going to do right by our veterans across the board, as long as it takes. We're not going to stop working to make sure that they get the care, the benefits, and the opportunities that they've earned and they deserve. I said we wouldn't tolerate misconduct, and we will not. I said that we have to do better, and we will. There are too many veterans receiving care right now who deserve all of our best efforts and an honest assessment if something is not working.

This week, I visited some of our men and women in uniform at different stages of their service: our newest Army officers who graduated from West Point, our troops currently serving in Afghanistan, our veterans and our military families at Arlington. And what I saw is what I've seen in every single servicemember, veteran, and military spouse that I have had the privilege to meet: a selfless, clear-eyed commitment to serving their country the best way that they know how. They're the best that our country has to offer. They do their duty. They expect us to do ours.

So today I want every man and woman who's served under our flag to know, whether your tour has been over for decades or it's just about to end, we will never stop working to do right by you and your families.

Let me take a couple questions. All right? Leo Shane from Military Times.

Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki/Veterans Health Administration System

Q. Mr. President, what changed in your opinion of Secretary Shinseki in the last few days? You had said you had confidence in him—even him coming in today and saying it was time for him to resign—what made the difference in your mind?

The President. Ric's judgment. I think his belief that he would be a distraction from the task at hand, which is to make sure that what's broken gets fixed so that his fellow veterans are getting the services that they need.

I want to reiterate, he is a very good man. I don't just mean he's an accomplished man. I don't just mean that he's been an outstanding soldier. He's a good person who's done exemplary work on our behalf. And under his leadership, we have seen more progress on more fronts at the VA and a bigger investment in the VA than just about any other VA Secretary: cut veterans homelessness by 24 percent; brought in folks who had been exposed to agent orange who had been waiting for decades to get the services and benefits that they had earned; making sure that posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury was dealt with in a serious way; making sure we had facilities for our women vets, who all too often weren't receiving the kind of specialized services that they needed.

So he's been a champion of our veterans. And where there's problems, he has been ready and willing to get in there and fix them. So with the disability backlog that had shot up as a consequence of the admission of the agent

orange veterans, as well as making it easier to apply for posttraumatic stress disorder disability claims, when it spiked, he went at it in a systematic way, and we've now cut it by 50 percent over the course of the last year or so.

He's not adverse to admitting where there's a problem and going after it. But we occupy a—not just an environment that calls for management fixes, we've also got to deal with Congress and you guys. And I think it—Ric's judgment that he could not carry out the next stages of reform without being a distraction himself

And so my assessment was, unfortunately, that he was right. I regret that he has to resign under these circumstances, but I also have confidence in Sloan, and I share Ric Shinseki's assessment that the number-one priority is making sure that problems get fixed so that if there's a veteran out there who needs help that they're getting a schedule and they're able to come in and see a doctor, and that if there are facilities that don't have enough doctors or do not have enough nurses or do not have enough space, that that information immediately gets in the hands of decisionmakers, all the way up to me and all the way to Congress, so that we can get more resources in there to help folks.

And that seems to be the biggest problem. I think that's the thing that offended Secretary Shinseki the most during the course of this process. He described to me the fact that when he was in theater, he might have to order an attack just based on a phone call from some 20-something-year-old corporal, and he's got to trust that he's getting good information. And it's life or death. And I think he is deeply disappointed in the fact that bad news did not get to him and that the structures weren't in place for him to identify this problem quickly and fix it. His priority now is to make sure that happens, and he felt like new leadership would be—would serve our veterans best. And I agree with him.

Phil Mattingly [Bloomberg Television].

Department of Veterans Affairs/Veterans Health Administration System

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Based on the audit, at least the early-stage audit the Secretary presented to you——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——is there a sense that there was criminal wrongdoing? And I guess, more broadly, how much responsibility do you personally bear, as this being an issue you campaigned on and cared about deeply—you said cared about deeply during your administration—now that we're at this point?

The President. Well, I will leave it up to the Justice Department to make determinations in terms of whether there's been criminal wrongdoing. In terms of responsibility, as I've said before, this is my administration; I always take responsibility for whatever happens. And this is an area that I have a particular concern with. This predates my Presidency. When I was in the Senate, I was on the Veterans Affairs Committee. I heard firsthand veterans who were not getting the kinds of services and benefits that they had earned. And I pledged that if I had the privilege of serving as Commander in Chief and President, that we would fix it.

The VA is a big organization that has had problems for a very long time: in some cases, management problems; in some cases, funding problems. And so what we've tried to do is to systematically go after the problems that we were aware of and fix them. And where we have seen our veterans not being properly served—whether it was too many homeless veterans or a disability claims process that was taking too long—we would go at it and chip away at it and fix it.

When it came to funding, we've increased funding for VA services in an unprecedented fashion, because we understood that it's not enough just to give lip service to our veterans, but not being willing to put our money where our mouth is.

And so what I can say confidently is that this has been a priority, it's been a priority reflected in my budget, and that in terms of managing the VA—where we have seen a problem,

where we have been aware of a problem—we have gone after it and fixed it and have been able to make significant progress.

But what is absolutely clear is, this one, this issue of scheduling, is one that the reporting systems inside of the VHA did not surface to the level where Ric was aware of it or we were able to see it. This was not something that we were hearing when I was traveling around the country: the particular issue of scheduling. And what we're going to have to do—part of the review is going to have to be to see how do we make sure that we get information about systems that aren't working.

I just was talking to Rob Nabors, and he described to me, for example, just in very specific detail, how in some of these facilities, you've got computer systems for scheduling that date back to the nineties; situations in which one scheduler might have to look at four or five different screens to figure out where there's a slot and where there might be a doctor available; situations in which they're manually passing requests for an appointment over to somebody else, who's then inputting them. Right? So you have, in many cases, old systems, broken-down systems.

This is stuff that is eminently fixable, but we've got to know about it. And the big concern that I've got, and what I'm going to be interested in finding out, is how is it that in a number of these facilities, if in fact you have veterans who are waiting too long for an appointment, that that information didn't surface sooner so that we could go ahead and fix it.

One last point I want to make on this: When veterans have gotten access to the system, the health care itself that they are receiving has gotten high marks from our veterans service organizations and the veterans themselves. So I think it's important to keep in mind that what the review indicates so far, at least, is that there have been great strides made in the actual care provided to veterans. The challenge is getting veterans into the door, particularly for their first appointment, in some cases, and where they don't have an established relationship with a doctor and they're not in the system.

Part of that is going to be technology. Part of that is management. But as Ric Shinseki himself indicated, there is a need for a change in culture within the VHA and perhaps the VHA as a whole—or the VA as a whole, that makes sure that bad news gets surfaced quickly so that things can be fixed. And I know that was the attitude of Secretary Shinseki and that was what he communicated to folks under him, but they didn't execute. And that's a problem.

Christi Parsons [Chicago Tribune], last question.

Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki/Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius/Veterans Health Administration System/Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan D. Gibson

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You said that it was the general's own judgment that made the decision for you here. If I remember correctly, Secretary Sebelius offered you her resignation after healthcare.gov failed

The President. Right.

Q. ——and you declined to take it.

The President. Yes.

Q. So I wonder if there's a little bit of scapegoating taking place here.

The President. Meaning?

Q. Meaning, is—I mean—the dysfunction within the Department seems to have been very deep and very widespread.

The President. Yes.

Q. So is lopping off the head of it really the best step to take going forward here? Is there—what I'm asking is, is there a political reason for removing him other than going straight to the problem of the bureaucracy?

The President. Well, the distractions that Ric refers to in part are political. He needs to be—at this stage, what I want is somebody at the VA who is not spending time outside of solving problems for the veterans. I want somebody who's spending every minute of every day figuring out have we called every single veteran that's waiting; have they gotten a schedule; are we fixing the system; what kind of new technology do we need; have we made a realistic assessment of how long the wait

times are right now and how are we going to bring those wait times down in certain facilities where the wait times are too long; if we need more money, how much more money do we need to ask from Congress and how am I going to make sure Congress delivers on that additional funding.

That's what I want somebody at the VA focused on, not how are they getting second-guessed and speculation about their futures and so forth and so on. And that was what Ric agreed to as well.

With respect to Secretary Sebelius, at the time I thought it would be a distraction to replace somebody at HHS at a time when we were trying to fix that system. And I wanted to just stay focused because I knew that if we beared down on it and we got folks enrolled that it would work.

So in each instance, my primary decision is based on: How can I deliver service to the American people, and in this case, how can I deliver for our veterans? And because they are people of integrity, I think in both the cases of Secretary Sebelius, but certainly, in the case here of Ric Shinseki, they've got the same priority. They're view is, what is it that is going to best deliver on behalf of folks who, as Ric said this morning, have been let down?

Q. Well, I remember at the time that you felt she had so much knowledge about what had gone wrong that you couldn't afford to lose that.

The President. Right.

Q. Does somebody with 3 months in leadership at the Department have the capacity to attack the problem quickly now?

The President. Well, we're going to need a new VA Secretary. So Sloan is Acting. Sloan, I think, would be the first to acknowledge that he's going to have a learning curve that he's got to deal with.

But the nature of the problem that has surfaced and has been the cause of this attention is one that we can start tackling right away, and without completely transforming the system we can immediately make some progress. We're going to have some longer term issues that we're going to have to take care of.

So my first step is everybody who's out there waiting, get them an appointment. If we need more doctors, let's figure out how we can surge some doctors in there to make sure that they're getting the help that they need. What I wanted to make sure of then is that even if it's still patchwork, how do we make sure that there is no slippage between somebody making a phone call and them getting an appointment scheduled? And let's have a realistic time for how soon they're going to get an appointment. Those are things that don't require rocket science. It requires execution, it requires discipline, it requires focus. Those are things that Sloan has.

There are then going to be some broader issues that we're going to have to tackle. The information systems inside the VHA, those are probably going to have to be changed. That will cost some money, that will take some time, and it will have to be implemented. I think there are going to have to be some changes in the culture within the VHA, because as I said, they're providing very good service, medical treatment to our veterans when they get in the system, but they don't have, apparently, the state-of-the-art operations that you would want to see, for example, in a major medical center or hospital.

Now, keep in mind, those of us who are outside of the VA system and try to get an appointment with the doctor in the private sector and try to get an appointment for—a schedule for a hospital visit, there are probably some wait times as well. So part of what we have to do is figure out what are realistic benchmarks for the system.

And my suspicion is that with not only all the veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan coming back, but also the aging of our Vietnam vets who may have more chronic illnesses, may need more visits, we may need to get more doctors, and we may need to get more nurses. And that's going to cost some money, which means that's going to have to be reflected in a Veteran Affairs budget, which I have consistently increased. Even during fiscally tight times, there's been no area where I've put more priority than making sure that we're delivering the kind of budget that's necessary to make sure our

veterans are being served, but it may still not be enough.

And we're going to—but before we start spending more money, our first job is let's take care of some basic management issues that I think can be fixed.

All right? Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:17 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the My Brother's Keeper Task Force
May 30, 2014

Earlier this year, I launched something we're calling "My Brother's Keeper," and I think that many of you recall me talking in very personal terms about someone who grew up without a father and made some mistakes when I was young, but benefited from the love and attention and opportunities that were given to me during the course of growing up, and the fact that we have too many young men of color—Black boys and young men, Latino boys and young men—who are adrift and don't have those same opportunities and don't have those same structures of support.

The idea behind "My Brother's Keepers" was that there are a lot of folks that want to do something, but we hadn't created a platform, a mechanism to gather all those resources together, concentrate them, focus on them, get good data, figure out what the best practices are, and then go out there and implement.

And so what I did was assign a process for us to inventory everything that's already being done to help young boys of color and men of color to succeed, to have every agency—from Justice Department to Education to HUD to USDA—look at how they could contribute to the process to make sure that we've got the best data possible and then to report back to me so that we can have a plan of attack.

Today, thanks to the good work of my Cabinet Secretary, who has been heading this up, as well as our Deputy Secretary of Education, Broderick Johnson and Jim Shelton—they've presented to me our report on what we need to be doing. And it is comprehensive, and it goes—everything from making sure that we've got better early childhood education to finding better ways to create apprenticeship programs and job training programs and mentorship programs; how do we modify policies in schools where young men of color are being disproportionally suspended, which we know results in higher dropout rates, which we know results potentially in them ending up in the prison system; all the way to how do we deal with young people who have gotten into trouble with the law, but are—can be redeemed if we have effective ways of reaching them.

With this Task Force report, we're now looking to implement. And we're partnering with philanthropies, we're partnering with businesses, we're partnering with community organizations and nongovernment organizations that are already doing great jobs on the ground, but feel isolated and disconnected from other efforts in other places.

And the goal then is going to be for us over the course of the next couple of years to really put in place not only a all-hands-on-deck effort on the Federal level, but a partnership with the private sector so that we can see some concrete outcomes. And we've already got enormous enthusiasm from mayors around the country, many of whom tell us that this is the single most important priority that they have in ensuring that their cities will thrive. We've got businesses who are saying, we know this is going to be the workforce of the future, and if we do not address this demographic, our companies aren't going to prosper, and the American economy as a whole is not going to grow as quickly as it could.

We know that there is enormous enthusiasm from faith-based groups that feel as if they're laboring out there on their own and want to connect up with others. We know that our national service programs have real interest in figuring out how this works.

So you're going to see a rollout over the next several weeks of some very specific commitments that have already been made. We have benefited from input from a whole range of sources. There have been listening tours that Broderick and Jim have conducted in cities all across the country.

I want to thank the CEO of Deloitte, Joe Echevarria, as well as Magic Johnson, who are going to be leading an external push to get more folks on board. And I also want to thank Members of Congress who have given us some great input as well.

One of the big pushes we're going to make because of the timing is on summer jobs. And already we're seeing, I think, a much greater sense of urgency this summer about putting these young people in opportunities where they can learn the basic skills that they're going to need to get attached to the labor market.

So overall, I'm very happy with the report. We'll give the press the report and/or an executive summary to see the very specific steps, the things that we know are going to work. And we are going to be rolling out over the next several weeks more specifics about commitments that we've obtained, and you can expect over the course of the next year, you're going to be getting more news from us about the successes that we're achieving and the lessons that we've learned.

But the bottom line is this: As we approach Father's Day, I'm just reminded that I am only here because a bunch of folks invested in me. We've got a huge number of kids out there who have as much talent or more talent than I had, but nobody is investing in them. And I want to make sure that I use this platform—and every Cabinet member here wants to make sure that they use the tools that they've got—so that these young men and young boys know somebody cares about them, somebody is thinking about them, and that they can succeed and make America stronger as a consequence. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Cabinet Secretary Broderick Johnson, in his capacity as Chair, and Deputy Secretary of Education James H. Shelton, in his capacity as Executive Director, of the My Brother's Keeper Task Force; and Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Jr., former player, National Basketball Association.

Remarks on the Resignation of James F. "Jay" Carney as White House Press Secretary and the Appointment of Joshua R. Earnest as White House Press Secretary

May 30, 2014

[*The President interrupted a press briefing by Press Secretary Carney.*]

The President. Hello. You haven't seen me enough today. One of Jay's favorite lines is, "I have no personnel announcements at this time." But I do. And it's bittersweet. It involves one of my closest friends here in Washington.

In April, Jay came to me in the Oval Office and said he was thinking about moving on, and I was not thrilled, to say the least. But Jay has had to wrestle with this decision for quite some time. He has been on my team since day one: for 2 years with the Vice President, for the past 3½ years as my Press Secretary. And it has obviously placed a strain on Claire, his wife, and his two wonderful kids Hugo and Della. Della's Little League team, by the way, I had a chance to see the other day, and she's a fine pitcher. But he wasn't seeing enough of the games.

Jay was a reporter for 21 years before coming to the White House, including a stint as Moscow bureau chief for Time magazine during the collapse of the Soviet empire. So he comes to this place with a reporter's perspective. That's why, believe it or not, I actually

think he will miss hanging out with all of you, including the guys in the front row. [*Laughter*]

Q. Come on!

Q. Third row. Third row. [*Laughter*]

Q. He's holding his breath. [*Laughter*]

The President. But Jay has become one of my closest friends and is a great Press Secretary and a great adviser. He's got good judgment. He has a good temperament. And he's got a good heart. And I'm going to miss him a lot. I will continue to rely on him as a friend and adviser after he leaves to spend as much of the summer as he can with his kids before he decides what's next for him. Whatever it is, I know he's going to be outstanding at it.

Of course, that meant I had to make a decision, which is who succeeds Jay. And we've got enormous talent around here, but I've decided that we're going to put in this slot somebody who is also a friend and adviser. So today the flak jacket is officially passed to a new generation: Mr. Josh Earnest.

Josh is a coach's son from Kansas City. He still roots for the Royals, I guess. [*Laughter*]

Q. Sure, he does.

The President. As you know, his name describes his demeanor: Josh is an earnest guy, and you can't find just a nicer individual even outside of Washington.

The country, of course, knows him for his golden voice and dulcet tones on West Wing Week, the biggest viral Internet hit since "Between Two Ferns." [*Laughter*]

But Josh and I have an incredible history going all the way back to the Iowa caucuses. Josh was my Iowa communications director. And even when he was in that role, you'd find him spending an extra hour or two helping young staffers make phone calls or knock on doors. There was no task that was too small, no detail too unimportant for Josh to attend to.

At the White House, he's been a mentor to many of the young people here who I know are thrilled for him today. He is of sound judgment and great temperament. He is honest and full of integrity. And I'm sure you will at some point get frustrated with him as well—[*laughter*]—but it's going to be hard, because he's a straight shooter and a great guy.

So my request is that, be nice to Jay on his farewell tour, and be nice to Josh during his initiation, which I'm sure will last maybe 2 days or perhaps two questions. [*Laughter*]

Q. Is this effective immediately?

The President. So we're going to let him hang around a little bit to milk it for all it's worth. [*Laughter*]

All right? Thank you, guys.

Press Secretary Carney. Thank you, sir.

Press Secretary-designate Earnest. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Claire Shipman, wife of Press Secretary Carney; and Don Earnest, father of Press Secretary-designate Earnest. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Press Secretary Carney and Press Secretary-designate Earnest.

Remarks During a Hurricane Preparedness Briefing at the Federal Emergency Management Agency
May 30, 2014

Well, we're here at FEMA's National Response Coordination Center to get an update on this year's preparations for hurricane season, which begins on Sunday. I want to thank Secretary Jeh Johnson as well as FEMA coordinator—or FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate for leading this briefing. And I also want to thank all the hard-working employees in all the departments that are responsible for helping us prepare, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

States still have the primary role in preparing for and responding to disasters, and we'll continue to make sure that they get the full re-

sources that they need and support they need to back them up. But it's also every citizen's responsibility to make sure that we are prepared for emergencies when they come, not just hurricanes, but every emergency. And that's why I want to thank the representatives that we have from not just the Department of Energy, but also the Commonwealth of Virginia as well as the folks from Orange County, Florida, who have developed mobile apps to give residents the ability to plan, prepare for, get faster notice of, and respond to emergencies.

Before a hurricane is even on the horizon, these apps can help families develop emergency plans, figure out evacuation routes, and receive emergency alerts. After a storm, one app provides information about power outages and where gas stations might be open. Others show residents where to find shelter and water. So I encourage every American to visit ready.gov. That's our national website where you can go and get every bit of information you need to figure out whether you're ready in the event, heaven forbid, something happens. You can get even more information about family emergency plans and supply kits and the plans that are taking place in your community.

And over the larger term, the changes we're seeing in our climate means that, unfortunately, storms like Sandy could end up being more common and more devastating. And that's why we're also going to be doing more to deal with the dangerous carbon pollution that helps to cause climate change and global warming. And that's why we're also, with the terrific help of these departments, thinking of how we can build more resilient infrastructure.

But obviously, most urgently, as hurricane season begins, we have to remember that responding to a hurricane is a team effort and everybody is going to have a role to play at the Federal, State, and local levels. So I encourage every family and business owner to check out ready.gov and see what you can do to be prepared.

And while I'm here, I also want to thank not only the staff and employees of—who each and every day, without a lot of attention, help communities deal with disasters, but I also want to thank all the first responders out there all across the country, because when they're called on, they're the ones who have to get there first and often put themselves at risk and do an amazing job. All right?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting Designations Under the Kingpin Act

May 30, 2014

Dear _____:

This report to the Congress, under section 804(a) of the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, 21 U.S.C. 1903(b)(1) (the "Kingpin Act"), transmits my designations of the following three foreign individuals as appropriate for sanctions under the Kingpin Act and reports my direction of sanctions against them under the Act:

Francisco de Fatima Frederico Barros (Cape Verde)
Jose Adan Salazar Umaña (El Salvador)
Victor Ramón Navarro Cerrano (Colombia)

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Carl M. Levin, chairman, and James M. Inhofe, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Ronald L. Wyden, chairman, and Orrin G. Hatch, ranking member, Senate Committee on Finance; Robert Menendez, chairman, and Robert P. Corker, Jr., ranking member, Senate

Committee on Foreign Relations; Dianne Feinstein, chairman, and Saxby Chambliss, vice chairman, Senate Committee on Intelligence; Patrick J. Leahy, chairman, and Charles E. Grassley, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, chairman, and Adam Smith, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; Edward R. Royce, chairman, and Eliot L. Engel, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Michael J. Rogers, chairman, and C.A. "Dutch" Ruppersberger, ranking member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Robert W. Goodlatte, chairman, and John Conyers, Jr., ranking member, House Committee on the Judiciary; and David L. Camp, chairman, and Sander M. Levin, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means.

The President's Weekly Address
May 31, 2014

Hi, everybody. I'm here at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC, visiting with some kids being treated here all the time for asthma and other breathing problems. Often, these illnesses are aggravated by air pollution, pollution from the same sources that release carbon and contribute to climate change. And for the sake of all our kids, we've got to do more to reduce it.

Earlier this month, hundreds of scientists declared that climate change is no longer a distant threat, it "has moved firmly into the present." Its costs can be measured in lost lives and livelihoods, lost homes and businesses, and higher prices for food, insurance, and rebuilding.

That's why, last year, I put forward America's first Climate Action Plan. This plan cuts carbon pollution by building a clean energy economy: using more clean energy, less dirty energy, and wasting less energy throughout our economy.

One of the best things we can do for our economy, our health, and our environment is to lead the world in producing cleaner, safer energy. And we're already generating more clean energy than ever before. Thanks in part to the investments we made in the Recovery Act, the electricity America generates from wind has tripled. And from the sun, it's increased more than tenfold. In fact, every 4 minutes, another American home or business goes solar. And every panel is pounded into place by a worker whose job cannot be shipped overseas.

We're wasting less energy too. We doubled down how far our cars and trucks will go on a gallon of gas by the middle of the next decade, saving you money at the pump, and we're helping families and businesses save billions with more efficient homes, buildings, and appliances.

This strategy has created jobs, grown our economy, and helped make America more energy independent than we've been in decades, all while holding our carbon emissions to levels not seen in about 20 years. It's a good start. But for the sake of our children, we have to do more.

This week, we will. Today, about 40 percent of America's carbon pollution comes from power plants. But right now there are no national limits to the amount of carbon pollution that existing plants can pump into the air we breathe. None. We limit the amount of toxic chemicals like mercury, sulfur, and arsenic that power plants put in our air and water. But they can dump unlimited amounts of carbon pollution into the air. It's not smart, it's not safe, and it doesn't make sense.

That's why, a year ago, I directed the Environmental Protection Agency to build on the efforts of many States, cities, and companies and come up with commonsense guidelines for reducing dangerous carbon pollution from our power plants. This week, we're unveiling these proposed guidelines, which will cut down on the carbon pollution, smog, and soot that threaten the health of the most vulnerable Americans, including children and the elderly. In just the first year that these standards go into effect, up to 100,000 asthma attacks and

2,100 heart attacks will be avoided, and those numbers will go up from there.

These standards were created in an open and transparent way, with input from the business community. States and local governments weighed in too. In fact, nearly a dozen States are already implementing their own market-based programs to reduce carbon pollution. And over a thousand mayors have signed agreements to cut their cities' carbon pollution.

So the idea of setting higher standards to cut pollution at our power plants is not new. It's just time for Washington to catch up with the rest of the country. Now, special interests and their allies in Congress will claim that these guidelines will kill jobs and crush the economy. Let's face it, that's what they always say.

But every time America has set clear rules and better standards for our air, our water, and our children's health, the warnings of the cynics and the naysayers have been wrong. They warned that doing something about the smog choking our cities and acid rain poisoning our lakes would kill business. It didn't. Our air got cleaner, acid rain was cut dramatically, and our economy kept growing.

These excuses for inaction somehow suggest a lack of faith in American businesses and American ingenuity. The truth is, when we ask our workers and businesses to innovate, they do. When we raise the bar, they meet it. When we restricted cancer-causing chemicals in plastics and leaded fuel in our cars, American chemists came up with better substitutes. When we phased out the gases that depleted the ozone layer, American workers built better refrigerators and air conditioners. The fuel standards we put in place a few years ago didn't cripple automakers; the American auto industry retooled, and today, they're selling the best cars in the world, with more hybrids, plug-in, and fuel-efficient models to choose from than ever before.

In America, we don't have to choose between the health of our economy and the health of our children. The old rules may say we can't protect our environment and promote economic growth at the same time, but in America, we've always used new technology to break the old rules.

As President and as a parent, I refuse to condemn our children to a planet that's beyond fixing. The shift to a cleaner energy economy won't happen overnight, and it will require tough choices along the way. But a low-carbon, clean energy economy can be an engine of growth for decades to come. America will build that engine. America will build the future: a future that's cleaner, more prosperous, and full of good jobs; a future where we can look our kids in the eye and tell them we did our part to leave them a safer, more stable world.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:45 p.m. on May 30 in a wet lab at the Children's National Medical Center's Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation for broadcast on May 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 30, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 31.

Statement on the Release of Sergeant Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, From Captivity by Taliban Forces in Afghanistan
May 31, 2014

Today the American people are pleased that we will be able to welcome home Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, held captive for nearly 5 years. On behalf of the American people, I was honored to call his parents to express our joy that they can expect his safe return, mindful of their courage and sacrifice throughout this ordeal. Today we also remember the many troops held captive and whom remain missing or unaccounted for in America's past wars. Sergeant Bergdahl's recovery is a reminder of America's unwavering commitment to leave no

man or woman in uniform behind on the battlefield. And as we find relief in Bowe's recovery, our thoughts and prayers are with those other Americans whose release we continue to pursue.

For his assistance in helping to secure our soldier's return, I extend my deepest appreciation to the Amir of Qatar. The Amir's personal commitment to this effort is a testament to the partnership between our two countries. The United States is also grateful for the support of the Government of Afghanistan throughout our efforts to secure Sergeant Bergdahl's release.

This week, the United States renewed its commitment to the Afghan people and made clear that we will continue to support them as their chart their own future. The United States also remains committed to supporting an Afghan-led reconciliation process as the surest way to achieve a stable, secure, sovereign, and unified Afghanistan. While we are mindful of the challenges, it is our hope Sergeant Bergdahl's recovery could potentially open the door for broader discussions among Afghans about the future of their country by building confidence that it is possible for all sides to find common ground.

Remarks on the Release of Sergeant Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, From Captivity by Taliban Forces in Afghanistan
May 31, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. This morning I called Bob and Jani Bergdahl and told them that after nearly 5 years in captivity, their son Bowe is coming home.

Sergeant Bergdahl has missed birthdays and holidays and the simple moments with family and friends, which all of us take for granted. But while Bowe was gone, he was never forgotten. His parents thought about him and prayed for him every single day, as did his sister Sky, who prayed for his safe return.

He wasn't forgotten by his community in Idaho or the military, which rallied to support the Bergdahls through thick and thin. And he wasn't forgotten by his country, because the United States of America does not ever leave our men and women in uniform behind.

As Commander in Chief, I am proud of the servicemembers who recovered Sergeant Bergdahl and brought him safely out of harm's way. As usual, they performed with extraordinary courage and professionalism, and they have made their Nation proud.

Right now our top priority is making sure that Bowe gets the care and support that he needs and that he can be reunited with his family as soon as possible.

I'm also grateful for the tireless work of our diplomats and for the cooperation of the government of Qatar in helping to secure Bowe's release. We've worked for several years to achieve this goal, and earlier this week I was able to personally thank the Amir of Qatar for his leadership in helping us get it done. As part of this effort, the United States is transferring five detainees from the prison in Guantanamo Bay to Qatar. The Qatari Government has given us assurances that it will put in place measures to protect our national security.

I also want to express gratitude to the Afghan Government, which has always supported our efforts to secure Bowe's release. Going forward, the United States will continue to support an Afghan-led process of reconciliation, which could help secure a hard-earned peace within a sovereign and unified Afghanistan.

As I said earlier this week, we're committed to winding down the war in Afghanistan, and we are committed to closing Gitmo. But we also made an ironclad commitment to bring our prisoners of war home. That's who we are as Americans. It's a profound obligation within our military, and today, at least in this instance, it's a promise we've been able to keep.

I am mindful, though, that there are many troops who remained missing in the past. That's why we're never going to forget; we're never going to give up our search for service-

members who remain unaccounted for. We also remain deeply committed to securing the release of American citizens who are unjustly detained abroad and deserve to be reunited with their families, just like the Bergdahls soon will be.

Bob and Jani, today families across America share in the joy that I know you feel. As a parent, I can't imagine the hardship that you guys have gone through. As President, I know that I speak for all Americans when I say we cannot wait for the moment when you are reunited and your son Bowe is back in your arms.

So with that, I'd like Bob to have an opportunity to say something, and Jani, if she'd like, as well. Please.

Jani Bergdahl. I just want to say thank you to everyone who has supported Bowe. He's had a wonderful team everywhere. We will continue to stay strong for Bowe while he recovers. Thank you.

Robert Bergdahl. I'd like to say to Bowe right now, who is having trouble speaking English——

[*At this point, Mr. Bergdahl spoke briefly in Pashto, and no translation was provided. He then continued in English as follows.*]

Mr. Bergdahl. I'm your father, Bowe.

To the people of Afghanistan, the same. Khalifa Al Thani, the complicated nature of this recovery was—will never really be comprehended. To each and every single one who effected this, in this country, in the service branches, at the State Department, throughout the whole of American Government, and around the world—international governments around the world, thank you so much. We just can't communicate the words this morning when we heard from the President.

So we looked forward to continuing the recovery of our son, which is going to be a considerable task for our family. And we hope that the media will understand that that will keep us very preoccupied in the coming days and weeks as he gets back home to the United States.

Thank you all for being here very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:16 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sky Albrecht, sister of Sgt. Bergdahl; Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar; and Khirullah Said Wali Khairkhwa, Mohammed Fazi, Norullah Noori, Abdul Haq Wasiq, and Mohammed Nabi Omari, members of the Afghan Taliban released from the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station detention center in Cuba to Qatari custody in Doha, Qatar, in exchange for the release of Sgt. Bergdahl. Mr. Bergdahl referred to Prime Minister Abdallah bin Nasir bin Khalifa Al Thani of Qatar.

Teleconference Remarks to Public Health Organizations on the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan
June 2, 2014

Thanks, Gina. And thanks to all the folks at EPA who worked so hard to put this plan forward. I want to thank everybody who is on the call. We're going to be talking about carbon pollution and the standards that we proposed this morning.

I think a lot of people are aware of the Climate Action Plan that I put forward last year based on what we know, which is that climate change is real. It has impacts not just in a distant future. It has serious impacts, as we speak. And what the EPA and Gina has been able to put forward, based on conversations they've had with a wide range of stakeholders from businesses to workers to many of the health organizations that are on the phone today, what she's been able to do with her team is to craft a sensible, State-based plan that provides States a wide range of options in terms of achieving their goals, but makes sure that we are reducing the carbon pollution that hurts the health of our kids and the health of the planet, while also giving us enormous opportunities to grow and improve the economy in all sorts of ways.

Now, up until now, there have been no national limits on the amount of carbon pollution that existing power plants can pump into the air. In contrast, we limit the amount of toxic chemicals like mercury and sulfur and arsenic that power plants put into our air and water. And the essence of the plan that the EPA is presenting makes sure that we're finally doing the same with carbon.

Since carbon emissions are a major contributor to climate change and since power plants are responsible for about 40 percent of America's carbon pollution, these new standards are going to help us leave our children a safer and more stable world.

And since air pollution from power plants actually worsens asthma and other breathing problems, putting these guidelines in place will help protect the health of vulnerable Americans, including children and the elderly.

And I just want to give one example. I got a letter from Dian Coleman, who is a mother of four. Her three kids have asthma. Her daughter has a congenital health defect. She keeps her home free of dust that can trigger asthma attacks. Cigarettes aren't allowed across the threshold of her home. But despite all that, she can't control the pollution that contributes potentially to her kids' illnesses, as well as threatening the planet. We've got to make sure that we're doing something on behalf of Dian and doing it in a way that allows us also to grow the economy and get at the forefront of our clean energy future.

And the health issues that we're talking about hit some communities particularly hard. African American children are twice as likely to be hospitalized for asthma, four times as likely to die from asthma. Latinos are 30 percent more likely to be hospitalized for asthma. So these proposed standards will help us meet that challenge head on. It sets carbon targets, give States and regions the flexibility to meet them, using the mix of energy resources that work best for them, whether it's natural gas or cleaner coal or solar or wind or hydropower or geothermal or nuclear. And it provides a huge incentive for the States and consumers to become more energy efficient.

As a result, your electricity bills will shrink as these standards spur investment in energy efficiency, cutting waste. And ultimately, we're going to be saving money for homes and for businesses.

Now, I promise you, you will hear from critics who say the same thing they always say: that these guidelines will kill jobs or crush the economy. What we've seen every time is that these claims are debunked when you actually give workers and businesses the tools and the incentive they need to innovate. When Americans are called on to innovate, that's what we do, whether it's making more fuel-efficient cars or more fuel-efficient appliances or making sure that we are putting in place the kinds of equipment that prevents harm to the ozone layer and eliminates acid rain. At every one of these steps, there have been folks who have said it can't be done. There have been naysayers who said this is going to destroy jobs and destroy industry.

And it doesn't happen because once we have a clear target to meet, we typically meet it. And we find the best ways to do it.

And by the way, the idea of setting higher standards to cut carbon is not new. A lot of companies are already moving to lower carbon energy sources. You've got more than a dozen States that are already implementing market-based programs to reduce carbon pollution. Over a thousand mayors have agreed to cut their cities' carbon emissions.

Today, carbon emissions are at the lowest they've been in about 20 years. And that's a good start. But it's just not good enough when you look at the projections of where we're going. And for the sake of our children, we're going to have to do more. In America, we do not have to choose between the health of our economy and the health of our kids. We can do both.

And you should expect that there's going to be a heated debate in Washington. There's going to be a lot of efforts to put out misinformation and to try to make sure that spin overwhelms substance and that PR overwhelms science. But I wanted to call you directly so you guys hear from me directly: This is something that is important

for all of us, as parents, as grandparents, as citizens, as folks who care about the health of our families and also want to make sure that future generations are able to enjoy this beautiful blue ball in the middle of space that we're a part of. So I just want you to all join in and work hard to build momentum for these plans because this the right direction to go in and it's going to mean a better future for America.

And if we're working together, I guarantee you we can build that cleaner, healthier, and more prosperous future. So thanks very much, everybody. Bye-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Regina McCarthy; and Winchester, VA, resident Dian Coleman. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Memorandum on the Response to the Influx of Unaccompanied Alien Children Across the Southwest Border
June 2, 2014

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Response to the Influx of Unaccompanied Alien Children Across the Southwest Border

The influx of unaccompanied alien children (UAC) across the southwest border of the United States has resulted in an urgent humanitarian situation requiring a unified and coordinated Federal response. Accordingly, I have directed the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary) to establish an interagency Unified Coordination Group to ensure unity of effort across the executive branch in responding to the humanitarian aspects of this situation, consistent with the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive–5 (Management of Domestic Incidents)(HSPD–5), including coordination with State, local, and other nonfederal entities. The Secretary shall establish and manage this Unified Coordination Group consistent with the authorities in 6 U.S.C. 111(b)(1)(D), 112(a)(3), 112(b)(1), 112(c), and HSPD–5. The Secretary has advised me that he will direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Administrator), subject to the oversight, direction, and guidance of the Secretary, to serve as the Federal Coordinating Official who shall lead and coordinate the Unified Coordination Group consistent with the functions of the Administrator pursuant to 6 U.S.C. 313, 314(a)(1) and (10). As the Federal Coordinating Official, the Administrator (or his designee) shall lead and coordinate Federal response efforts to ensure that Federal agency authorities and the resources granted to the departments and agencies under Federal law (including personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and managerial, technical, and advisory services) are unified in providing humanitarian relief to the affected children, including housing, care, medical treatment, and transportation. The Administrator shall execute these responsibilities consistent with all applicable laws and regulations, including legal requirements governing the appropriate care and custody of UAC.

Nothing in this memorandum alters, or impedes the ability to carry out, the authorities of Federal departments and agencies to perform their responsibilities under law. All Federal departments and agencies are directed to provide their full and prompt cooperation, resources, and support, as appropriate and consistent with their own responsibilities for addressing this situation, and shall cooperate with the Secretary and the Federal Coordinating Official to ensure a unified Federal response. The Secretary shall lead the coordination of the Federal response to this urgent humanitarian situation and other departments and agencies supporting this effort shall provide support to address

this situation as appropriate and to the extent permitted by law.

This memorandum does not obligate any agency to reimburse another agency for the resources used to address the UAC humanitarian situation nor does it limit the use of the Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535), as appropriate.

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks With President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland to United States and Polish Troops at Warsaw Chopin Airport in Warsaw, Poland
June 3, 2014

President Komorowski. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor for me to be able to welcome the President of the United States here to the airport against the background of the F–16 aircraft, Polish and American aircraft.

It is [a]* very significant symbol of Polish-American military cooperation. This symbol has a long history. It is enough to remember Tadeusz Kościuszko. Mr. President, you just visited West Point; there's a beautiful monument to Tadeusz Kościuszko there. And it is also a reminder of the special brotherhood-in-arms that goes back to the 18th century; I'm talking about the Polish-American brotherhood-in-arms.

Here, because of the F–16s here, I would like to remind you that we have already had an opportunity to host American pilots in the Polish skies. It was at a very important moment in Poland. It was back in 1920 when the first Polish squadron was fighting against the Bolsheviks' wave, and it was established on the basis of the American pilots, mainly those of Polish origin from Chicago and other American towns. But these were American pilots.

That is why it is important for us to be able to really mark the lasting Polish-American brotherhood-in-arms. And I think that F–16—while "F" can stand for fighter, but "F" can also stand for freedom, Mr. President. And I'm convinced that it matches perfectly well the 25th anniversary of Poland's regaining its freedom and that it's really worthwhile being strengthened and to become a permanent, stable element to make Poland secure and safe—the security of Poland and the whole of region. It's also about Polish-American cooperation; it is also about the presence of American troops in Poland, in the Polish territory, at the time when we are all experiencing this crisis that is unfolding just across the Poland's border, just across the border of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in Ukraine.

Mr. President, once again, thank you very much for coming here, and thank you very much for the opportunity to mark together the lasting Polish-American brotherhood-in-arms.

President Obama. Dzień dobry! Good morning, everybody. Thank you, Mr. President, for the kind words. It is wonderful to be back in Poland, one of our great friends and one of our strongest allies in the world.

It is a special honor to be here as Poles celebrate the 25th anniversary of the rebirth of Polish democracy. And this year also marks the 15th anniversary of Poland's membership in NATO. I'm starting the visit here because our commitment to Poland's security, as well as the security of our allies in Central and Eastern Europe, is a cornerstone of our own security and it is sacrosanct.

And during my visit here 3 years ago, I said that the United States would increase our commitment to Poland's security. The United States honors our commitments, which you see in the aviation detachment at Łask Air Base. It is a commitment that I—is particularly important at this moment in time.

We just had a chance to meet some outstanding servicemembers—both Americans and Poles—who serve and train here togeth-

* White House correction.

er. They're part of the backbone of an alliance and part of the long history, as Mr. President alluded to, of Poles and Americans standing shoulder to shoulder for freedom. And we are so grateful to all of you for your service.

Given the situation in Ukraine right now, we've also increased our American presence. We've begun rotating additional ground troops and F–16 aircraft into Poland. And this is going to help our forces train together. It's is going to help our forces support NATO air missions. It's also part of NATO's stepped-up presence across Central and Eastern Europe. And I look forward to announcing some additional steps later today.

So, President Komorowski, it is wonderful to be here. I want to thank you and the Polish people for welcoming me. As friends and as allies, we stand united, together and forever. *Na zawsze razem.* Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10:05 a.m. in an aircraft hangar. President Komorowski spoke in Polish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's News Conference With President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland in Warsaw
June 3, 2014

Moderator. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to welcome you very cordially to the press conference of the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Bronislaw Komorowski, and the President of the United States of America, Mr. Barack Obama. The President and—Bronislaw Komorowski, can you please take the floor?

President Komorowski. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, it really is a great joy and a great satisfaction for me to be able to host the President of the United States to Poland on the 25th anniversary of the regaining freedom by us.

It is also a great satisfaction and a great hope to host the President of the United States of America in a situation when, with concern, we are watching the crisis situation developing across the eastern border of Poland and across the eastern border of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, across the eastern border of the European Union in Ukraine.

That is why I am so glad that this meeting, that these talks signify also the reassurances of the security guarantees of this region of Europe. And they also signify the joint aspiration to strengthen the roles, significance, and the strength of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I am also very satisfied to be able to know that, actually, in all the areas that have been raised during our conversation, we are on the same page fully, and we also get full understanding of our intentions.

I would like to stress the Polish satisfaction that the President of the United States of America speaks in a very clear voice about the necessity to strengthen the role of the article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Poland has been really making efforts to get at this. And here and now, I would like to thank very much for the engagement of the United States in the actions to confirm in practice the declarations on the significance of NATO under the Washington Treaty for the security of Poland and the whole region; I mean here also other countries that are located along the eastern flank of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I also wish to stress that it is our common concern—is that at the Wales summit of NATO reconfirm the need for the greater engagement of NATO in the development of infrastructure that would facilitate the reception of the reinforcement forces in case of threat.

I also fully appreciate that we are of the same opinion as far as the need of the update and the continuous exercises of the armed forces from the perspective of the contingency plans is concerned. I also would like to stress that we are also of an absolutely the same opinion about the necessity to increase our

financial efforts to fund armed forces by the member states of NATO.

That is why I would like to inform you, ladies and gentlemen, that together with the Government—because this is something that we agreed with the Government—I submitted President Obama also, the Polish will to make a gesture backed with a very tangible value in terms of increasing the level of our own engagement in the shaping up of the defense budget. It is also about making a gesture to encourage other member states of NATO to follow the same way—because other countries in the neighborhood of Poland are to raise very significantly—or raising very significantly their defense budgets.

Poland—and I will recommend this to the Government, I will recommend this to the Parliament pretty soon—Poland intends to increase the defense budget of our Armed Forces. Poland is going to increase the funding of the modernization of the Polish Armed Forces up to the level of 2 percent of the GDP. And it means that is a very tangible, very clear engagement at the level that refers to what we talked about in the early 2000s. And now, in the result of economic growth, which is our current situation—and it is going to continue—and it means that it is a very serious source of funding for the Polish Armed Forces as a more and more significant component of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization capabilities.

I also would like very much for raising important questions like energy security. I wish to tell you that the—this conversation that is going to be continued. This conversation is very important for Poland, and we are going to continue to talk about it during the meeting of the President, myself, with other Presidents from our region of Central and Eastern Europe. President Obama, together with me, will be the cohosts of this meeting. We will talk about security, and we will also talk about other important aspects of the functioning of NATO nations. Those nations that, together with Poland, regained their independence 25 years ago.

We will talk about how Polish freedom regained then can be strengthened and secured from the potential risks.

Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you very much, Mr. President. And now, President Barack Obama, can you please take the floor?

President Obama. Dzień dobry. Thank you, President Komorowski. To you and the Polish people, I want to thank you for welcoming me back to Poland today, and it is an honor to be here to celebrate 25 years of freedom.

Mr. President, on my last visit to Warsaw, you said that "dreams come true when, apart from dreams, we have courage and determination." And thanks to the courage and determination of you and so many Poles displayed over the decades, the idea of a free and democratic and prosperous Poland is not a dream anymore, it is a reality.

Obviously, the American people have deep connections to Poland. My hometown of Chicago has especially deep connections to Poland. And it makes it that much more special for me to be a part of this moment. And I also want to thank you for welcoming me on the eve of your birthday, so let me say, *Cto lat!*

I've come here, first and foremost, to reaffirm the enduring commitment of the United States to the security of Poland. As NATO allies, we have an article 5 duty to our collective defense. As President, I've made sure that the United States is upholding that commitment. We're on track with our missile defense program, including interceptor sites here in Poland. As we saw this morning, our American aviation detachment here is the first regular presence of U.S. forces in Poland. We continuously rotate additional personnel and aircrafts into Poland and the Baltics. And I want to commend Poland for its contributions to the NATO air patrols over the Baltics.

Today I'm announcing a new initiative to bolster the security of our NATO allies here in Europe. Under this effort, and with the support of Congress, the United States will preposition more equipment in Europe. We will be expanding our exercises and training with allies to increase the readiness of our forces.

And I know President Komorowski is a great champion of the effort to modernize the Polish military, and we welcome the announcement that he just made about an even greater commitment.

We'll increase the number of American personnel—Army and Air Force units—continuously rotating through allied countries in Central and Eastern Europe. And we will be stepping up our partnerships with friends like Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia as they provide for their own defense. I'm calling on Congress to approve up to $1 billion to support this effort, which will be a powerful demonstration of America's unshakeable commitment to our NATO allies.

Poland, to its credit, is a leader in the alliance when it comes to investing in our collective defense. We've seen that again today. Poland's resolve, and the initiative I'm proposing today, is a reminder that every ally needs to carry their share and truly invest in the capabilities of the alliance that are needed for the future.

Of course, President Komorowski and I focused mostly on the situation in Ukraine. And perhaps because Poles know better than most how precious freedom truly is, Poland and your President have displayed outstanding leadership in recent months.

We agree that further Russian provocation will be met with further costs for Russia, including, if necessary, additional sanctions. Russia has a responsibility to engage constructively with the Ukrainian Government in Kiev, to prevent the flow of militants and weapons into eastern Ukraine. Russia also needs to be using its influence with armed separatists to convince them to stop attacking Ukrainian security forces, leave buildings that they've seized, lay down their arms, and enter into the political process.

Meanwhile, the United States and Poland will continue to support Ukrainians as they embark on political and economic reforms. We're prepared to help facilitate a dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and representatives of separatist regions. And I look forward to discussing all this with President-elect Poroshenko tomorrow.

Finally, President Komorowski and I discussed a range of issues critical to our shared prosperity, including the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which would boost trade between the United States and Europe, including facilitating potential energy exports from the United States into Europe. We agreed that there are more steps that can be taken to diversify Europe's energy sources. That's important not only for Europe's economy, but also for its security. And that's a topic that I'll focus on later today when we meet with other Central and Eastern European Presidents.

So thank you, Mr. President, again for your partnership and your hospitality. I could not be more grateful to have the opportunity to join tomorrow's celebration in Castle Square and a chance to address the Polish people. *Dziękuję.*

Moderator. Mr. President, thank you very much. We are moving onto questions: two questions for Polish and American journalists. The first question, Szymanski, Polish Press Agency.

NATO-Russia Relations/Ukraine

Q. A question of both Presidents: How will the situation in Ukraine influence the change of the relation between NATO and Russia? And what assurances President-elect Poroshenko hear from both of you? Both of you are going to talk with him.

President Komorowski. First of all, I would like to thank very much for the birthday wishes. It undoubtedly is thanks to my mom and not myself. But I want to thank you very much for that.

One thing is certain, that it is the merit of the whole nation of Poland is Polish freedom, Polish freedom that was regained on the 4th of June, 1989.

Answering your question about NATO-Russia relations, I can tell you that the Western world continues—well, including Poland, and I'm sure it goes for all other countries of NATO—everyone is very much interested in developing as good relations with Russia as

possible and as good cooperation as possible. Poland is also very much interested in the continuation of this uneasy process of the reconciliation beyond difficult history and painful history and bloody history.

However, to make sure that this cooperation, this reconciliation could really function also between NATO and Russia, it is absolutely necessary today, though, for Russia to totally give up the application of violence in conduct with its neighbors. It is also necessary for Russia to give up similar intentions vis-a-vis other countries that are in the neighborhood of Russia, including those countries that are members of the alliance.

That is why what we would like to see is the full reconfirmation of the will to cooperate with Ukraine, free and independent Ukraine. What we expect is the reconfirmation of acceptance or full understanding of the result of the Presidential elections in Ukraine. And we also are looking forward to the talks about developing of good relations between Russia and Ukraine.

President Obama. Well, I thoroughly agree with your President about the importance of maintaining good relations with Russia, but not sacrificing principle in pursuit of good relations.

The fact of the matter is, is that Russia is a significant country with incredibly gifted people, resources, an enormous land mass, and they rightfully play an important role on the world stage and in the region. But what we have learned from our history—and nobody understands that better than the Poles—is that basic principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty and freedom, the ability for people to make their own determinations about their country's future is the cornerstone of the peace and security that we've seen in Europe over the last several decades. And that is threatened by Russian actions in Crimea and now Russian activity in eastern Ukraine.

So we have said consistently that not only do we seek good relations with Russia, but we expect Ukraine to have strong relations with Russia. We don't believe that Ukraine has to choose between good relations with Europe and good relations with Russia. We do think that Ukrainians should make their own decisions about the future of their country without meddling, interference, or armed militias being financed from the outside trying to disrupt the effort of Ukrainians to reform themselves, to strengthen their democracy, and to improve their economy.

And as a consequence, we will continue to support Ukrainian efforts. The fact that there has been an election on May 25 and we have now a President-elect, I think, gives us some momentum to build on as we move forward. The President-elect of Ukraine has indicated his willingness to work with all regions of Ukraine to create a constitutional order that is representative of all people. And he has said that he is interested in pursuing good relations with Russia. But what he has said, and he is right to say is, is that the sovereignty of Ukraine should not be sacrificed in that effort, and we fully support him in that.

And NATO's relationship with Russia, I think, will be one in which, if Russia is observing basic international law and principles, there should be cooperation between Russia and NATO; where Russia violates international law and international principle, NATO will stand firm in asserting those principles. Okay?

White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest. All right. The first question from the American side will come from Nedra Pickler with the Associated Press.

Release of Sgt. Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, From Captivity by Taliban Forces in Afghanistan/Prisoner Exchange From the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center to Qatari Custody

Q. Thank you. I wanted to ask you if you have learned more about the circumstances of Sergeant Bergdahl's capture and whether he could face any punishment given that the Pentagon has concluded that he left his unit? Also, could you respond to congressional Republicans who say that you violated the law by not notifying them 30 days in advance and that the release or the transfer of the Taliban prisoners could put Americans at risk? Did your willingness to go around that 30-day requirement sig-

nal a new urgency to close Guantanamo now that you're ending combat operations in Afghanistan?

And also, President Komorowski, can you say whether the steps that President Obama outlined today to increase the U.S. military presence here in Europe are enough to mitigate whatever threat you see coming from Russia, or do you want more from the United States?

President Obama. The United States has always had a pretty sacred rule, and that is, we don't leave our men or women in uniform behind. And that dates back to the earliest days of our Revolution.

We have consulted with Congress for quite some time about the possibility that we might need to execute a prisoner exchange in order to recover Sergeant Bergdahl. We saw an opportunity. We were concerned about Sergeant Bergdahl's health. We had the cooperation of the Qataris to execute an exchange, and we seized that opportunity. And the process was truncated because we wanted to make sure that we did not miss that window.

With respect to the circumstances of Sergeant Bergdahl's capture by the Taliban, we obviously have not been interrogating Sergeant Bergdahl. He is recovering from 5 years of captivity with the Taliban. He's having to undergo a whole battery of tests, and he is going to have to undergo a significant transition back into life. He has not even met with his family yet, which indicates, I think, the degree to which we take this transition process seriously, something that we learned from the Vietnam era.

But let me just make a very simple point here, and that is, regardless of the circumstances, whatever those circumstances may turn out to be, we still get an American soldier back if he's held in captivity. Period. Full stop. We don't condition that. And that's what every mom and dad who sees a son or daughter sent over into war theater should expect from not just their Commander in Chief, but the United States of America.

In terms of potential threats, the release of the Taliban who were being held in Guantanamo was conditioned on the Qataris keeping eyes on them and creating a structure in which we can monitor their activities. We will be keeping eyes on them. Is there the possibility of some of them trying to return to activities that are detrimental to us? Absolutely. That's been true of all the prisoners that were released from Guantanamo. There is a certain recidivism rate that takes place. I wouldn't be doing it if I thought that it was contrary to American national security. And we have confidence that we will be in a position to go after them if, in fact, they are engaging activities that threaten our defenses.

But this is what happens at the end of wars. That was true for George Washington, that was true for Abraham Lincoln, that was true for FDR, that's been true of every combat situation, that at some point, you make sure that you try to get your folks back. And that's the right thing to do.

Q. Just to clarify, could Sergeant Bergdahl face discipline, or is that off the table?

President Obama. That's not something that we're discussing at this point, because our main priority is making sure that the transition that he's undergoing after 5 years of captivity is successful.

President Komorowski. I would like to answer your question. Certainly, for us, the decisions of the American authorities to increase its presence in the Eastern countries of NATO are very important. We welcome them with great hope. And we welcome these decisions as an announcement of a true return of NATO to focusing very strongly on questions that are connected with the foundations of the alliance, which is article 5 of the Washington Treaty that refers to the collective defense: the defense on the basis of solidarity of the territories, the homelands of the member states.

We are absolutely convinced that this is a good response, and it is important for the whole region, not only for Poland. It is an important response that will be analyzed and evaluated as a very important element of discouragement for Russia to continue the policy of pressure and aggression against the neighbors that are located to the east of our borders.

However, I am absolutely convinced that another element that is so important that also supplements the will that is expressed by President Obama to increase the presence of the American Armed Forces in Eastern Europe will be the engagement of NATO in the development of additional NATO infrastructure that is prerequisite for the possible effective reception of the reinforcement forces. These two elements in my opinion create a situation of full reconfirmation—reaffirmation of the security of our region. And for this I would like to thank you.

Moderator. Next question, TVN–24.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Question of both Presidents: Referring to what has been raised a moment ago, this European initiative—European reassurance initiative, doesn't do away with the division into old and the new members of the alliance. It doesn't mean that the deployment of ground troops of the United States, and Poland and other countries like the Baltic States counted on this very much. So what kind of American troops can we expect in Poland, specifically, within the next months or years? Is it going to be some components of the ground troops? And if so, when are they going to come?

President Obama. Well, the—first of all, when you discuss old and new NATO members, I recall my first NATO meeting back in 2009, and I made very clear, at that first meeting, my belief that there's no such thing as new members of NATO and old members of NATO, there are just members of NATO. And because that was my strong view then and continues to be my strong view now, I immediately pushed to make sure that we were putting in place contingency plans for every NATO member. And those contingency plans have been steadily developed over the last several years.

And part of what I think your President just indicated is very important is that our contingency plans are not just pieces of paper on a shelf, but we have the capacity to operationalize them. That means that there has to be resources pre-positioned, there has to be training, there have to be joint exercises. We have been conducting those, but there's no doubt that what has happened in Ukraine adds a sense of urgency when we meet in Wales in the next NATO summit.

And part of what I discussed with Secretary General of NATO Rasmussen and now with the new Secretary General Stoltenberg is the need to make sure that the collective defense effort is robust, it is ready, it is properly equipped.

That does mean that every NATO member has to do its fair share. Obviously, we all have different capacities. The United States is going to have different capacities than Poland; Poland is going to have a different capacity than Latvia. But everyone has the capacity to do their fair share, to do a proportional amount to make sure that we have the resources, the planning, the integration, the training in order to be effective.

Some of that has to do with where our personnel is positioned. And obviously, as I indicated before, my administration has put U.S. soldiers on Polish soil for the first time. This new initiative that I'm putting forward gives us the option, the capacity, to add to those rotations.

But I think it's important to recognize that the effectiveness of our defenses against any threat is not just going to be dependent on how many troops we have in any particular country; it has to do with how we are working collectively together to make sure that when any NATO member is threatened, all of us can respond rapidly, whether it's through air, sea, or land.

And that's going to require some flexibility. It's going to require some additional planning. It's going to require some joint capabilities that right now we don't have. Frankly, NATO is very reliant on U.S. capabilities, but has not always invested in some joint capabilities that would be important as well. And it's going to require every NATO member to step up. We have seen a decline steadily in European defense spending generally. There are exceptions like Poland, like Estonia, but for the most part, we have seen a steady decline. That has to change.

The United States is proud to bear its share of the defense of the transatlantic alliance. It is the cornerstone of our security. But we can't do it alone. And we're going to need to make sure that everybody who is a member of NATO has full membership. They expect full membership when it comes to their defense; then that means that they've also got to make a contribution that is commensurate with full membership.

President Komorowski. For Poland, what is really fundamental is to make sure that nobody from outside of NATO claims the right to determine what NATO member states may do and what they may not do. And it also concerns the question of the presence of NATO troops and NATO infrastructure in the Polish territory.

What is most important for us is to make sure that there are no second-category member states of NATO, that there are no countries about whom an external country—a third country like Russia—can say whether or not American or other allied troops can be deployed to these countries. That is why the decision of the United States of America to deploy American troops to Poland is really very important for us, both as an element of deterrence, but also as a reconfirmation that we do not really accept any limitations concerning the deployment of NATO troops to Poland imposed for some time or suggested for some time by a country that is not member of NATO.

Another thing is the inadequacy of response to the existing situation. The Ukrainian crisis, the Russian behavior about Crimea, for example, forced the necessary response to it. And this response is both the real presence of American troops, reinforced aviation detachment, and then the ground troops that are—component, as well as the declaration of President Obama to increase this presence even more. I would like to remind you that Poland is also making a contribution in the reconfirmation of an equal right of every member state to decide whether or not they are going to receive NATO troops in their territories.

So Poland is participating in the air policing mission that is a mission to provide security for the air space over the Baltic States. We do it together with other allies from NATO, and we don't ask anybody for acceptance except for what is agreed within NATO internally. The same goes for the Poland's participation in the Afghan operation in ISAF. It was the reconfirmation of full solidarity and full coresponsibility for the decisions which are made not only for the military effort, but also for political decisions. Poland has been and shall continue to be a spokescountry for the solidarity within NATO. And that this can be manifested also in the denial of the right of anyone from outside of NATO to decide whether we can do something or we cannot do it.

President-Elect Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine/International Economic Aid to Ukraine/Ukraine-U.S. Military Cooperation/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Principal Deputy Press Secretary Earnest. The second question from the American side will come from Margaret Talev with Bloomberg News.

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, now that the Ukraine has successfully elected its new President, can you talk to us about how much military assistance you are prepared to give Ukraine, either as part of this package or more broadly? And you spoke about the importance of not sacrificing principle in pursuit of good relations with Mr. Putin. You know Prime Minister Cameron and President Hollande will meet individually with Mr. Putin during this visit in France. Would you consider doing the same under some circumstances, or do you think it's premature? And I think we're just interested in getting inside your mind. You'll see him at this lunch, at least probably shake hands. What do you want to say to him if you could?

If I may, also, President Komorowski, 25 years after the Solidarity election victory, are you concerned that Poland and the region are still vulnerable to a return to Russian dominance? And do you believe that President Putin actually wants to reconstitute the Soviet Union? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, first of all, I'm looking forward to the chance to talk to the

President-elect of Ukraine tomorrow. I want to hear from him what he thinks would be most helpful. My suspicion, based on the discussions that we've had intensively with Ukrainian officials over the last several months, is, they're very interested in making sure that economic support is in place. They're very concerned about making sure that energy is in place as winter comes up.

The IMF package and the international assistance, including ours, that has been forthcoming is going to be critical, I think, in these early months of the new Government's efforts to solidify its position and also to reach out to skeptics and say there's the prospect for a better life. But that has to translate into concrete action. And so we're going to spend a lot of time on the economics of Ukraine.

With respect to the defense of Ukraine, we have had a partnership with the Ukrainian military for quite some time. We have strong relations. There have been Ukrainian officers who have been trained in the United States. During this crisis, we have provided them nonlethal assistance that's been critical for them.

Part of what's going to be interesting to hear is the strategy to deal with eastern Ukraine in a way that is careful about civilian casualties, but recognizes that you can't have a bunch of masked thugs creating chaos in a big chunk of your country and that there has to be some mechanism to return law and order to many of these areas. And this is where Russian influence can be extraordinarily important.

Now, in terms of my relationship with Mr. Putin, I have always had a businesslike relationship with Mr. Putin. Throughout this crisis, I have talked to Mr. Putin by phone. I've been very clear with him privately about the same principles that I lay out publicly: We are interested in good relations with Russia; we are not interested in threatening Russia. We recognize that Russia has legitimate interests in what happens along its borders and has a long historic relationship with Ukraine. But we also believe that the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty have to be respected, that Russia has violated them; that we are going to maintain sanctions that are directed at the annexation of Crimea; and that we have prepared economic costs on Russia that can escalate if in fact we continue to see Russia actively destabilizing one of its neighbors in the way that we've seen of late.

And Mr. Putin has a choice to make. He can make a decision that, having now begun to pull back his troops directly on the border, he also exerts his influence to get these separatist elements to stand down. He can meet with the President-elect of Ukraine, recognize that that was a legitimate election, and help to facilitate the kind of dialogue along the Ukraine-Russian border that can calm the situation down and encourage people to participate in a legitimate political process.

That's what I will tell him if I see him publicly. That's what I have told him privately. I would expect and hope that David Cameron and François Hollande would emphasize those same points to him when they meet with him. And if in fact we can see some responsible behavior by the Russians over the next several months, then I think it is possible for us to try to rebuild some of the trust that's been shattered during this past year.

But I think it is fair to say that rebuilding that trust will take quite some time. And in the meantime, we are going to be prepared for any contingencies that may come up if in fact Mr. Putin continues to pursue strategies that destabilize its neighbors, whether it's Ukraine or any NATO member or Moldova or others. We want to make sure that we stand with the people of countries that are simply seeking to choose their own destiny.

And I've said in the past and I will repeat again: I do not believe in spheres of influence. There are times where we have governments in the Western Hemisphere that are not particularly friendly to us, and we may make very clear that we don't like their policies, but under my administration, we don't go around and try to overthrow those governments or to finance or supply armed efforts to undermine those governments. That's not what we do, partly because we have enough confidence that we've got the better argument and ultimately governments that pursue oppressive policies, corrupt

policies, that over time, those governments will fail because that's not the kind of government that's going to meet the aspirations of people.

Q. What if you meet President Putin on this trip or would you rule that out?

President Obama. I'm sure I'll see him. He's going to be there. Russia—I think it's important for us to acknowledge the role that Russia played during World War II, and that's part of what Normandy is about.

All right? Okay.

President Komorowski. Well, ladies and gentlemen, it is difficult not to notice that something has changed to the east of the borders of NATO; that, again, we are having to deal with the aggression with the use of armed forces against one's neighbor. A few years ago it was Georgia; now it is Ukraine, with a special focus on the Crimea.

President Putin didn't hide it. He didn't hide that these were elements of the Russian Armed Forces, and that—this is something that we have to acknowledge. Just the same way Russia never hid that for the last 4 years it has increased its defense budget twofold. We, ourselves, have to ask a question, why? For what purpose? And what does it have to mean for member states of NATO?

All of us are interested in Russia to get modernized so that it was possible to do not only good business modernizing Russia, but also develop relations of good neighborhood and cooperation in many dimensions, in many areas. But today we have to answer to this situation that has come up by supporting independence of Ukraine and its right to choose its pro-Western direction. We have to support the modernization of Ukraine too.

I am convinced that this is the right way to develop the mechanism and a source of a very good and suggestive example for the Russian society, just as a great example for them was the development of democracy in Poland—free market, prosperity, security, safety. It acted very well on Ukraine, and I am convinced that it was simply an element of the Ukrainian dreams to follow along the same way, in the direction of the same values.

I am also convinced that the success of Ukraine, its democratic and independent nature, combined with overcoming the economic crisis and political crisis on the ground, combined with deep modernization of the Ukrainian society and state, will have a huge influence on the shaping of the attitudes of people within the Russian society. It is difficult not to notice today that the Russian public opinion has fully supported the aggressive behavior of President Putin in Crimea. The point is that a public opinion in Russia should stand on the side of the prospects for the modernization of Russia and not at the reconstitution of any zone of influence and any dreams of empire.

Ladies and gentlemen, this press conference is over. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:25 p.m. at Belweder Palace. In his remarks, President Obama referred to Khirullah Said Wali Khairkhwa, Mohammed Fazi, Norullah Noori, Abdul Haq Wasiq, and Mohammed Nabi Omari, members of the Afghan Taliban released from the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station detention center in Cuba to Qatari custody in Doha, Qatar, in exchange for the release of Sgt. Bergdahl; Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom; and President François Hollande of France. President Komorowski referred to his mother Jadwiga Komorowska. President Komorowski spoke in Polish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Donald Tusk of Poland in Warsaw
June 3, 2014

Prime Minister Tusk. Mr. President, I'm very happy that again here in Warsaw we had the opportunity to talk about Polish-American relations. And with great satisfaction, I observed

that so much has changed around us, but our relations and the nature of our relations remain the same. It remains so very good and of such fundamental significance as it was in the past when we spoke for the first time.

It was no coincidence in the fact that we began our meeting with my thanks to the very speedy and also very effective reaction of the United States to the Ukrainian crisis. And we're talking about the American reaction to the very situation in the region, but also in terms of support for Poland, which is both political—and we do remember that on this key day, when Crimea was subject to annexation, we remember the visit of Vice President Biden here to Warsaw, but we also highly appreciate your practical decisions about the support given to the Polish defense capabilities. And for that we're truly thankful, because that's not always so frequent in contemporary times.

We've exchanged information of our strategic cooperation. I informed Mr. President about our readiness and something that President Komorowski has also mentioned about our readiness to strengthen the Polish defense capabilities. We will also try to convince our European allies—also at the meeting at the NATO summit in Wales—we'll try to convince them to a common European effort for a common European defense and solidarity.

It was with great satisfaction that we welcomed the announcement of Mr. President about the readiness to increase the engagement and the plus-billion dollars dedicated to this part of the world. It was also with satisfaction that I heard from Mr. President this is just another step and that this is not the end and that in terms of the strategic perspective, we will continue to talk about the evermore intense cooperation and presence in this part of Europe—the presence of NATO in this part of Europe.

Our relations really, really do not require any repair, so we really did not have the needs to talk about Polish-American relations. But our opinions about Ukraine and the situation in the entire region and also in terms of energy cooperation, these opinions are in line. I've informed Mr. President about our Polish mission of the European energy union so as to increase the independence of Europe in terms of a single energy supply point. And I think that is also a domain where we see possibilities of practical cooperation. And I'm very happy that Mr. President has also declared his personal engagement so as to increase this possibility of energy diversification in Europe.

Again, so very much—so thank you very much, Mr. President. I did say at the beginning that a friend in need is a friend indeed. And I reiterate I'm sure that the experiences of recent months and also our talks here on the symbolic date of our 25th anniversary of freedom, these talks were not just symbolic and were not referring to the history. And I think that this is the most important thing in our relations: that we appreciate the same values and we like the same symbols, but at the same time, we both wanted to go in the similar direction. And the United States is the best partner we could ever imagine.

Thank you so very much, Mr. President.

And now, Mr. President.

President Obama. Dzień dobry. I want to thank you, Prime Minister Tusk, for your warm welcome. It's good to be back in this hall. I've said a lot today already about why we think Poland is so important, why the alliance between the United States and Poland is so important, but perhaps during my remarks here, I can say a little bit about why the economic progress that we've seen in Poland is so important. Economic growth wasn't inevitable just because Poland achieved its political freedom. It wasn't easy. Reforms here in Poland have been hard and have not been without sacrifice. But as you drive through Warsaw, you see that Poland is a country on the move, one with one of the largest and fastest growing economies in Europe, a manufacturing powerhouse, and a hub of high-tech innovation.

In fact, the last time I was here, Donald gave me a gift: the video game developed here in Poland that's won fans the world over, "The Witcher." I confess, I'm not very good at video games, but I've been told that it is a great example of Poland's place in the new global economy, and it's a tribute to the talents and

the work ethic of the Polish people, as well as the wise stewardship of Polish leaders like Prime Minister Tusk.

As I did with President Komorowski, I reiterated to the Prime Minister our rock-solid commitment to Poland's security, outlined for him the announcement I made earlier today about bolstering security to our NATO allies in Eastern Europe, and made clear that the United States is ready to deepen our defense cooperation as Poland modernizes its military.

As the Prime Minister indicated, we spent a lot of time on Ukraine. Mr. Prime Minister, you've been a strong voice in conveying Poland's solidarity to the Ukrainian people. And Poland's been a great partner to Ukrainian civil society groups, and Polish diplomacy has played a critical role earlier this year in preventing even more violence.

Poland is joining us in providing Ukraine with critical economic assistance. And my conversation with the Prime Minister illustrated again that our countries are absolutely united in the need to stand with the Ukrainian people as they move forward, and that is not just with respect to their territorial integrity and security, but also with respect to the kinds of economic reforms that are going to be needed.

As Ukrainians undertake the hard work of political and economic reform, Poland is going to have an important role to play in sharing the lessons of its own success, as Poland has with other countries in Eastern Europe and Central Europe and around the world.

And one of the areas we discussed was energy. Obviously, this has created significant vulnerabilities throughout Europe, particularly Eastern and Central Europe. And we highlighted the need for greater energy security in Europe, which Prime Minister Tusk has championed, but we also agreed that it's going to be critical for Ukraine to embark on effective efforts to reform its energy sector and diversify its supply of natural gas. Just to give one example, Ukraine's economy requires about three times as much energy to produce the same amount of output as Poland's does. And it's very hard for Ukraine then to be competitive and to be successful if in fact it is that inefficient when it comes to energy. So these are areas where I think we can make great progress. Donald's ideas on how Europe can reduce its energy risks by diversifying, investing in renewables, and upgrading energy infrastructure are ones that I think are important for everybody to listen to.

Poland is, for example, making an important investment that will allow the world's liquefied natural gas, LNG, to travel to Europe. For our part, the United States has already approved licenses for natural gas exports, which will increase global supplies and thereby benefit partners here in Europe. I also mentioned to the Prime Minister the importance of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, T–TIP, the trade agreement that we are negotiating currently between the United States and Europe.

Poland has been a supporter of an ambitious T–TIP agreement. And I indicated to him one of the benefits of a strong trade agreement is that it is much easier for me to approve natural gas exports to countries with which we already have a free trade agreement.

So last point, we discussed in the context of energy the issue of climate change. The United States just took major steps to propose new standards that would result in significant reductions in carbon emissions from our power plants. This has to be a global effort. Poland hosted a successful U.N. climate summit conference last year. As we work to shape a strong global climate agreement this year—or next year, rather, it's important for the United States and the EU to set an example by committing to ambitious goals to reduce emissions beyond 2020. And if we're thinking seriously about energy diversification, energy efficiency, we can combine those two efforts in ways that make us not only more politically secure and economically secure, but also more environmentally secure.

So let me just thank once again Prime Minister Tusk for his outstanding leadership, and let me thank the Polish people for their outstanding example. I'm confident that the friendship that we've established over the years will only be strengthened. And although it's

wonderful to have friends when things are going good, the Prime Minister is absolutely right that it's especially important to have friends when things are tough. And we don't have a better friend anywhere in the world than Poland. So we're grateful for that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:29 p.m. at the Chancellery. In his remarks, he referred to President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland. Prime Minister Tusk spoke in Polish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Central and Eastern European Leaders in Warsaw
June 3, 2014

Well, thank you very much. Good afternoon. And along with President Komorowski, I'm very pleased to welcome our outstanding allies from across Central and Eastern Europe. We have done this before in Prague and on my last visit to Warsaw. And I want to thank my fellow leaders for being here.

As the President indicated, this 25th anniversary of Polish freedom reminds us of the transformations that have taken place all across the region. The countries represented here have all undertaken hard reforms, have built democratic institutions, have delivered greater prosperity for their citizens, and underlying this progress is the security guarantee that comes from NATO membership. We're here today because as NATO allies, we have to stand absolutely united in our article 5 commitments to collective defense. We stand together always.

And as I've said throughout the day and previously back home, I continue to believe that NATO is the cornerstone, the foundation, of U.S. security, not just European security. Now, given Russia's actions in Ukraine, NATO has increased its presence across the region, from the Baltics to the Black Sea. I thank our allies for the contributions they're making, and I'll be discussing the initiative that I announced today to bolster the U.S. presence in Europe.

A number of countries represented here have already committed to increasing their investments in our collective defense, and today we'll be discussing additional steps that we can take both as individual nations and as an alliance to make sure we have the capabilities that we need. I expect that we'll also have an opportunity to discuss how Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe, can continue to diversify its energy sources. The United States will be exporting more natural gas to the global market in the years to come. But more immediately, there are steps that we can take together to reduce energy risk, upgrade our energy infrastructure, and improve efficiency.

So again, I want to thank our fellow leaders for being here today. I think our presence sends a powerful message that as NATO allies, we stand as one. Citizens across Central and Eastern Europe need to know that what you've built over the last 25 years no other nation can take away.

So I again thank you, President Komorowski, for your hospitality. And I think once the press clears the room, we can get the meeting started.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:24 p.m. at Koniecpolski Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President-Elect Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine in Warsaw, Poland
June 4, 2014

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to have my first extended meeting with President-elect Poroshenko and to hear about his plans for a peaceful

and prosperous Ukraine. Obviously, Ukraine has gone through a very challenging time. And what we have seen has been a incredible outpouring of democracy in the face of actions by Russia as well as armed militias in certain portions of the east that violate international law, violate sovereignty, and have spurred great violence.

Despite all that, what the Ukrainians said in the election that resulted in President-elect Poroshenko's Inauguration on Saturday is that they reject that past. They reject violence. They reject corruption. And what they're interested in is the opportunity for Ukrainians to make their own decisions about their own future, a future in which, if people work hard, if they are willing to educate themselves and apply themselves, that they can succeed and that they can choose their own representatives and that those representatives will look out for their interests and not the interests of only those in power.

That's the hope that President-elect Poroshenko represents. And in my discussions with him today, it's clear that he understands the aspirations and the hopes of the Ukrainian people. And when I say the Ukrainian people, I mean all the Ukrainian people. I think that President-elect Poroshenko recognizes that his mandate is not just to help certain portions of his country succeed, but all portions of his country to succeed.

We had the opportunity to discuss President-elect Poroshenko's plans for bringing peace and order to the east that is still experiencing conflict. We discussed his economic plans and the importance of rooting out corruption, increasing transparency, and creating new models of economic growth. We discussed issues of energy: making sure that Ukraine becomes a more energy efficient economy, but also one that is less dependent solely on energy sources from Russia. And I have been deeply impressed by his vision, in part because of his experience as a businessman, in understanding what's required to help Ukraine grow and to be effective.

The challenge now for the international community is to make sure that we are supporting Petro's efforts. And the United States has already stepped up in a number of ways. We're supplementing the assistance that the IMF is providing with $1 billion in additional loan guarantees, and we've discussed additional steps that we might take to help during this reform and transition process. We've discussed additional steps that we can take to help train and professionalize the Ukrainian law enforcement and military so they can deal with some of the challenges that are still taking place in certain portions of the country. And in fact, today we announced some additional nonlethal assistance that we can provide—things like night vision goggles—that will help a professional Ukrainian military force do its job.

And finally, we discussed how, in my meetings today with the G–7 and tomorrow with the G–7, as well as conversations that I'm having with other European leaders, it's important for the international community to stand solidly behind the efforts of Petro to broker with the Russians a process whereby Russia no longer is financing or supporting or arming separatists on Ukraine's sovereign territory, and that a unified international community that is clear that that is a violation of international law and that is willing to back up those principles with consequences for Russia should Mr. Putin not seize this opportunity to develop a lawful and better relationship with his neighbors—that that has to be part of our mission over the next several days.

So I'm excited about the opportunities. I think that the Ukrainian people made a wise selection in somebody who has the ability to lead them through this difficult period. And the United States is absolutely committed to standing behind the Ukrainian people and their aspirations not just in the coming days and weeks, but in the coming years, because we're confident that Ukraine can in fact be a thriving, vital democracy that has strong relationships with Europe and has strong relationships with Russia. But that can only happen if we stand clearly behind them during this difficult time.

So thank you so much for taking the time to meet.

President-elect Poroshenko. I want to thanks President Obama, the United States people, the United States Government and Congress for the continuous support they are demonstrating for the fight, the Ukrainian people, for freedom, for democracy, for building up independent sovereign European state. This is crucially important for us, and now we feel a friend in need is a friend indeed. The American position of the American people is very, very important for us.

Point number two is that from the very beginning, from the first day of Inauguration, we are ready to present the plan for peaceful relation, the situation on the east. And we think that the next several days will be very important, crucial, for the Ukrainian history and for Ukrainian perspective. We pay very much attention about the G–7 meeting, about the statement, about the possibility for finding out the position for peaceful process. On Normandy, when we have—first Ukraine were invited as a member of anti-Hitler coalition and celebration of the D-day. And I think this would be very symbolic because exactly in Normandy, we can start to find out this peaceful process in Ukraine.

I want to thank President for the support in our initiative in the reforming in the energy sector. I'm very satisfied about our future cooperation in the anticorruption deal that I think this is crucially important points for the modernization of the country. I think that the—our top two very important issue: We thank you for supporting Ukraine in solving our Crimea problem. We demonstrate that—the whole world demonstrate the solidarity in Ukraine in not accepting the aggression in Crimea, in not accepting this whole fake referendum, and not accepting the annexing of the part of Ukrainian territory. And all the time we will demand restore law and order and withdraw the foreign troops from the Crimean territory.

And also, I think that it is very important that the United States support the European aspiration of the Ukrainian people. That is, half a year Ukrainian people, millions of Ukrainian people on the street fighting for now and signing up a association agreement for the European perspective for my country. And I think that the modernization of the country, providing the reform of the—creating the good investment climate, building on the independent code system, providing the energy efficiency and energy diversification helps Ukrainian people to receive, maybe, membership perspective for the European Union in very near future after successful program for the modernization, with the strong assistance of the United States of America.

I thank you very much for that. And I think this was very fruitful and effective negotiation.

President Obama. Good. Thank you, my friend.

President-elect Poroshenko. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. at the Warsaw Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

Remarks on the 25th Anniversary of Freedom Day in Warsaw
June 4, 2014

Hello, Warsaw! *Witaj, Polsko!*

Mr. President; Mr. Prime Minister; Madam Mayor; heads of state and government, past and present, including the man who jumped that shipyard wall to lead a strike that became a movement, the prisoner-turned-President who transformed this nation—thank you, Lech Walesa, for your outstanding leadership.

Distinguished guests, people of Poland, thank you for your extraordinary welcome and for the privilege of joining you here today. I bring with me the greetings and friendship of the American people and of my hometown of Chicago, home to so many proud Polish Americans. In Chicago, we think of ourselves as a little piece of Poland. In some neighborhoods, you only hear Polish. The faithful come togeth-

er at churches like Saint Stanislaus Kostka. We have a parade for Polish Constitution Day. And every summer, we celebrate the Taste of Polonia, with our kielbasa and pierogies, and we're all a little bit Polish for that day. So being here with you, it feels like home.

Now, 25 years ago today, we witnessed a scene that had once seemed impossible: an election where, for the first time, the people of this nation had a choice. The Communist regime thought an election would validate their rule or weaken the opposition. Instead, Poles turned out in the millions. And when the votes were counted, it was a landslide victory for freedom. One woman who voted that day said: "There is a sense that something is beginning to happen in Poland. We feel the taste of Poland again." And she was right. It was the beginning of the end of communism, not just in this country, but across Europe.

And the images of that year are seared in our collective memory: citizens filling the streets of Budapest and Bucharest, Hungarians and Austrians cutting the barbed wire border, protesters joining hands across the Baltics, Czechs and Slovaks in their Velvet Revolution; East Berliners climbing atop that wall. And we have seen the extraordinary progress since that time: a united Germany; nations in Central and Eastern Europe standing tall as proud democracies; a Europe that is more integrated, more prosperous, and more secure. We must never forget that the spark for so much of this revolutionary change, for this blossoming of hope was lit by you, the people of Poland.

History was made here. But the victory of 1989 was not inevitable. It was the culmination of centuries of Polish struggle, at times in this very square: the generations of Poles who rose up and finally won independence; the soldiers who resisted invasion, from the east and the west; the Righteous Among the Nations—among them Jan Karski—who risked all to save the innocent from the Holocaust; the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto who refused to go without a fight; the Free Poles at Normandy; and the Poles of the Home Army, who, even as this city was reduced to rubble, waged a heroic uprising.

We remember how, when an Iron Curtain descended, you never accepted your fate. When the—when a son of Poland ascended to the Chair of Saint Peter, he returned home, and here, in Warsaw, he inspired a nation with his words: "There can be no just Europe without the independence of Poland." And today we give thanks for the courage of the Catholic Church and the fearless spirit of Saint John Paul II.

We also recall how you prevailed 25 years ago. In the face of beatings and bullets, you never wavered from the moral force of nonviolence. Through the darkness of martial law, Poles lit candles in their windows. When the regime finally agreed to talk, you embraced dialogue. When they held those elections—even though not fully free—you participated. As one Solidarity leader said at the time, "We decided to accept what was possible." And so Poland reminds us that sometimes the smallest steps, however imperfect, can ultimately tear down walls, can ultimately transform the world.

And of course, your victory that June day was only the beginning. As your President just indicated, democracy is more than just elections. True democracy, real prosperity, lasting security—these are neither simply given, nor imposed from the outside. They must be earned and built from within. And in that age-old contest of ideas between freedom and authoritarianism, between liberty and oppression, between solidarity and intolerance, Poland's progress shows the enduring strength of the ideals that we cherish as a free people.

Here we see the strength of democracy: citizens raising their voices, free from fear. Here we see political parties competing in open and honest elections. Here we see independent judiciary working to uphold the rule of law. Here in Poland, we see a vibrant press and a growing civil society that holds leaders accountable, because governments exist to lift up their people, not to hold them down.

Here we see the strength of free markets and the results of hard reforms: gleaming skyscrapers soaring above this city and superhighways across this country, high-tech hubs, and living standards that previous generations of

Poles could only imagine. This is the new Poland you have built, an economic "Miracle on the Vistula"—*Cud nad Wisła.*

Here we see the strength of free nations that stand united. And across those centuries of struggle, Poland's fate too often was dictated by others. This land was invaded and conquered and carved up and occupied. But those days are over. Poland understands as few other nations do that every nation must be free to chart its own course, to forge its own partnerships, to choose its own allies.

This year marks the 15th anniversary of Poland's membership in NATO. And we honor Polish service in the Balkans, in Iraq and Afghanistan. And as Americans, we are proud to call Poland one of our strongest and closest allies.

This is the Poland we celebrate today: the free and democratic Poland that your forebears and some who are here today dreamed of and fought for and, in some cases, died for; the growing and secure Poland that you, particularly the young people who are here today, have enjoyed for your entire lives.

It is a wonderful story, but the story of this nation reminds us that freedom is not guaranteed. And history cautions us to never take progress for granted. On the same day 25 years ago that Poles were voting here, tanks were crushing peaceful democracy protests in Tiananmen Square on the other side of the world. The blessings of liberty must be earned and renewed by every generation, including our own. And this is the work to which we rededicate ourselves today.

Our democracies must be defined not by what or who we're against, but by a politics of inclusion and tolerance that welcomes all our citizens. Our economies must deliver a broader prosperity that creates more opportunity across Europe and across the world, especially for young people. Leaders must uphold the public trust and stand against corruption, not steal from the pockets of their own people. Our societies must embrace a greater justice that recognizes the inherent dignity of every human being. And as we've been reminded by Russia's aggression in Ukraine, our free nations cannot be complacent in pursuit of the vision we share: a Europe that is whole and free and at peace. We have to work for that. We have to stand with those who seek freedom.

I know that throughout history, the Polish people were abandoned by friends when you needed them most. So I've come to Warsaw today—on behalf of the United States, on behalf of the NATO alliance—to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to Poland's security. Article 5 is clear: An attack on one is an attack on all. And as allies, we have a solemn duty—a binding treaty obligation—to defend your territorial integrity. And we will. We stand together, now and forever, for your freedom is ours. Poland will never stand alone. But not just Poland: Estonia will never stand alone, Latvia will never stand alone, Lithuania will never stand alone, Romania will never stand alone.

These are not just words. They're unbreakable commitments backed by the strongest alliance in the world and the Armed Forces of the United States of America, the most powerful military in history. And you see our commitment today: in NATO aircraft in the skies of the Baltics, in allied ships patrolling the Black Sea, in the stepped-up exercises where our forces train together, and in our increased and enduring American presence here on Polish soil. We do these things not to threaten any nation, but to defend the security and territory of ourselves and our friends.

And yesterday I announced a new initiative to bolster the security of our NATO allies and increase America's military presence in Europe. And with the support of Congress, this will mean more pre-positioned equipment to respond quickly in a crisis and more exercises and training to keep our forces ready; additional U.S. forces, in the air and sea and on land, including here in Poland. And it will mean increased support to help friends like Ukraine and Moldova and Georgia provide for their own defense.

Just as the United States is increasing our commitment, so must others. Every NATO member is protected by our alliance, and every NATO member must carry its share in our alli-

ance. This is the responsibility we have to each other.

And finally, as free peoples, we join together, not simply to safeguard our own security, but to advance the freedom of others. Today we reaffirm the principles for which we stand.

We stand together because we believe that people and nations have the right to determine their own destiny. And that includes the people of Ukraine. Robbed by a corrupt regime, Ukrainians demanded a government that served them. Beaten and bloodied, they refused to yield. Threatened and harassed, they lined up to vote; they elected a new President in a free election, because a leader's legitimacy can only come from the consent of the people.

And Ukrainians have now embarked on the hard road of reform. I met with President-elect Poroshenko this morning, and I told him that, just as free nations offered support and assistance to Poland in your transition to democracy, we stand with Ukrainians now. Ukraine must be free to choose its own future for itself and by itself. We reject the zero-sum thinking of the past. A free and independent Ukraine needs strong ties and growing trade with Europe and Russia and the United States and the rest of the world. Because the people of Ukraine are reaching out for the same freedom and opportunities and progress that we celebrate here today, and they deserve them too.

We stand together because we believe that upholding peace and security is the responsibility of every nation. The days of empire and spheres of influence are over. Bigger nations must not be allowed to bully the small or impose their will at the barrel of a gun or with masked men taking over buildings. And the stroke of a pen can never legitimize the theft of a neighbor's land. So we will not accept Russia's occupation of Crimea or its violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. Our free nations will stand united so that further Russian provocations will only mean more isolation and costs for Russia. Because after investing so much blood and treasure to bring Europe together, how can we allow the dark tactics of the 20th century to define this new century?

We stand together because we know that the spirit of Warsaw and Budapest and Prague and Berlin stretches to wherever the longing for freedom stirs in human hearts, whether in Minsk or Caracas or Damascus or Pyongyang. Wherever people are willing to do the hard work of building democracy—from Tbilisi to Tunis, from Rangoon to Freetown—they will have a partner in our nations. For in the struggles of these citizens we recall our own struggles. In their faces we see our own. And few see this more clearly than the people of Poland.

The Ukrainians of today are the heirs of Solidarity, men and women like you who dared to challenge a bankrupt regime. And when your peaceful protests were met with an iron fist, Poles placed flowers in the shipyard gate.

Today, Ukrainians honor their fallen with flowers in Independence Square. We remember the Polish voter who rejoiced to "feel the taste of Poland again." Her voice echoes in the young protester in the Maidan who savored what she called "a taste of real freedom." "I love my country," she said, and we are standing up for "justice and freedom." And with gratitude for the strong support of the Polish people, she spoke for many Ukrainians when she said: "Thank you, Poland. We hear you and we love you."

Today we can say the same: Thank you, Poland. Thank you for your courage. Thank you for reminding the world that no matter how brutal the crackdown, no matter how long the night, the yearning for liberty and dignity does not fade away. It will never go away. Thank you, Poland, for your iron will and for showing that, yes, ordinary citizens can grab the reins of history and that freedom will prevail, because in the end, tanks and troops are no match for the force of our ideals.

Thank you, Poland, for your triumph, not of arms, but of the human spirit, the truth that carries us forward. There is no change without risk and no progress without sacrifice and no freedom without solidarity.

Dziękuję, Polsko! God bless Poland. God bless America. God bless our unbreakable alliance. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in Castle Square. In his remarks, he referred to President Bronislaw Komorowski, Prime Minister Donald Tusk, and former President Lech Walesa of Poland; and Mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz of Warsaw, Poland.

Joint Statement by Group of Seven Leaders on Foreign Policy
June 4, 2014

Ukraine

- We welcome the successful conduct under difficult circumstances of the election in Ukraine on 25 May. The strong voter turnout underlined the determination of Ukraine's citizens to determine the future of their country. We welcome Petro Poroshenko as the President-elect of Ukraine and commend him for reaching out to all the people of Ukraine.
- In the face of unacceptable interference in Ukraine's sovereign affairs by the Russian Federation, we stand by the Ukrainian government and people. We call upon the illegal armed groups to disarm. We encourage the Ukrainian authorities to maintain a measured approach in pursuing operations to restore law and order. We fully support the substantial contribution made by the Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the de-escalation of the crisis through the Special Monitoring Mission and other OSCE instruments. We commend the willingness of the Ukrainian authorities to continue the national dialogue in an inclusive manner. We welcome the "Memorandum of Peace and Unity" adopted by the Verkhovna Rada on 20 May and express the wish that it can be implemented rapidly. We also encourage the Ukrainian parliament and the Government of Ukraine to continue to pursue constitutional reform in order to provide a framework for deepening and strengthening democracy and accommodating the rights and aspirations of all people in all regions of Ukraine.
- The G–7 are committed to continuing to work with Ukraine to support its economic development, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We encourage the fulfilment of Ukraine's commitment to pursue the difficult reforms that will be crucial to support economic stability and unlock private sector-led growth. We welcome the decision of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to approve a $17 billion programme for Ukraine, which will anchor other bilateral and multilateral assistance and loans, including around $18 billion foreseen to date from G–7 partners. We welcome the swift disbursement of macro-economic support for Ukraine. We support an international donor coordination mechanism to ensure effective delivery of economic assistance and we welcome the EU's intention to hold a high-level coordination meeting in Brussels. We welcome ongoing efforts to diversify Ukraine's sources of gas, including through recent steps in the EU towards enabling reverse gas flow capacities and look forward to the successful conclusion of the talks, facilitated by the European Commission, on gas transit and supply from the Russian Federation to Ukraine.
- We are united in condemning the Russian Federation's continuing violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, and actions to de-stabilize eastern Ukraine are unacceptable and must stop. These actions violate fundamental principles of international law and should be a concern for all nations. We urge the Russian Federation to recognize the results of the election, complete the withdrawal of its military forces on the border with Ukraine, stop the flow of weapons

and militants across the border and to exercise its influence among armed separatists to lay down their weapons and renounce violence. We call on the Russian Federation to meet the commitments it made in the Geneva Joint Statement and cooperate with the government of Ukraine as it implements its plans for promoting peace, unity and reform.

- We confirm the decision by G–7 countries to impose sanctions on individuals and entities who have actively supported or implemented the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and who are threatening the peace, security and stability of Ukraine. We are implementing a strict policy of non-recognition with respect to Crimea/Sevastopol, in line with UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262. We stand ready to intensify targeted sanctions and to implement significant additional restrictive measures to impose further costs on Russia should events so require.
- The projects funded by the donor community to convert the Chernobyl site into a stable and environmentally safe condition have reached an advanced stage of completion. While recognizing the complexity of these first of a kind projects, we call upon all concerned parties to make an additional effort to bring them to a satisfactory conclusion and call upon project parties to keep costs under control. This remains a high priority for us.

Syria

- We strongly condemn the Assad regime's brutality which drives a conflict that has killed more than 160,000 people and left 9.3 million in need of humanitarian assistance. We denounce the 3 June sham presidential election: there is no future for Assad in Syria. We again endorse the Geneva Communiqué, which calls for a transitional governing body exercising full executive powers and agreed by mutual consent, based on a vision for a united, inclusive and democratic Syria. We strongly condemn the violations of international humanitarian law and human rights and indiscriminate artillery shelling and aerial bombardment by the Syrian regime. There is evidence that extremist groups have also perpetrated grave human rights abuses. All those responsible for such abuses must be held to account. We welcome the commitment of the National Coalition and Free Syrian Army to uphold international law. We deplore Russia and China's decision to veto the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution draft authorizing referral to the International Criminal Court and demanding accountability for the serious and ongoing crimes committed in Syria.
- We are committed to supporting the neighboring countries bearing the burden of Syrian refugee inflows and deplore the failure to implement UNSC Resolution 2139 on humanitarian assistance. We urge all parties to the conflict to allow access to aid for all those in need, by the most direct routes, including across borders and conflict lines, and support further urgent action by the UNSC to that end. In our funding we decide to give particular support to humanitarian actors that can reach those most in need, including across borders. We call for the international community to meet the enormous funding needs of the UN appeals for Syria and its neighbours. We resolve to intensify our efforts to address the threat arising from foreign fighters travelling to Syria. We are deeply concerned by allegations of repeated chemical agent use and call on all parties in Syria to cooperate fully with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) fact-finding mission. We call on Syria to comply with its obligations under UNSC Resolution 2118, decisions of the Executive Council of the OPCW and the Chemical Weapons Convention to ensure the swift removal of its

remaining chemical stockpile for destruction, and to destroy its production facilities immediately and answer all questions regarding its declaration to the OPCW.

Libya

- We reaffirm our support for a free, prosperous and democratic Libya which will play its role in promoting regional stability. We express serious concern at the recent violence and urge all Libyans to engage with the political process through peaceful and inclusive means, underpinned by respect for the rule of law. We urge continued and coordinated engagement by the international community to support the Libyan transition and efforts to promote political dialogue, in coordination with the UN and with the UN Support Mission in Libya fulfilling its mandate in that respect. We ask all in the international community to respect fully Libyan's sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention in its affairs. In this framework, we commend the proposal of the High National Electoral Commission, endorsed by the General National Congress, to convene the elections on June 25. We emphasize the importance of these elections in restarting the political process and appreciate the vital work of the Constitution Drafting Assembly.

Mali and Central African Republic

- We welcome the ceasefire signed on May 23 by the Malian Government and armed groups in the North of Mali, thanks to efforts by the African Union, through its Presidency, and the UN. We reaffirm our strong commitment to a political solution and to an inclusive dialogue process that must start without delay, as prescribed by the Ouagadougou agreement and UNSC decisions. We fully support the United Nation's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali efforts in stabilizing the country and, with the commitment of neighboring countries, including Algeria, Mauritania and the Economic Community of West African States, in working for a durable settlement respectful of the unity, territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Mali.
- We commend the role played on the ground in the Central African Republic by the AU-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic, together with the forces sent by France and the European Union, to support the transition and encourage the Transitional Authorities to take urgent concrete steps toward holding free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections. We fully support the UN efforts in the areas of security, reconciliation, preparation of the elections, and humanitarian assistance.

Iran

- We reaffirm our strong commitment to a diplomatic resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue and welcome the efforts by the E3+3, led by High Representative Ashton, and Iran to negotiate a comprehensive solution that provides confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. We underline the importance of the continuing effective implementation by the E3+3 and Iran of the Joint Plan of Action. We call on Iran to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency on verification of Iran's nuclear activities and to resolve all outstanding issues, including, critically, those relating to possible military dimensions. We strongly urge Iran to fully respect its human rights obligations. We call on Iran to play a more constructive role in supporting regional security, in particular in Syria, and to reject all acts of terrorism and terrorist groups.

North Korea

- We strongly condemn North Korea's continued development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. We urge North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and to comply fully with its obligations under relevant UNSC resolutions and commitments under the September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. We call on the international community to implement fully UN sanctions. We reiterate our grave concerns over the ongoing systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations in North Korea documented in the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry, and urge North Korea to take immediate steps to address these violations, including on the abductions issue, and cooperate fully with all relevant UN bodies. We continue to work to advance accountability for North Korea's serious human rights violations.

Middle East Peace Process

- We fully support the United States' efforts to secure a negotiated two-state solution. We regret that greater progress has not been made by the parties and urge them to find the common ground and political strength needed to resume the process. A negotiated two-state solution remains the only way to resolve the conflict. We call on both sides to exercise maximum restraint and to avoid any unilateral action which may further undermine peace efforts and affect the viability of a two-state solution.

Afghanistan

- We renew our long-term commitment to a democratic, sovereign, and unified Afghanistan and our enduring partnership with the Government of Afghanistan based on the principles of mutual respect and mutual accountability. The first round of presidential elections and the provincial council elections marked a historic achievement, especially for the more than 2.5 million women who voted, and we look forward to the completion of the electoral process. We continue to assist the Government of Afghanistan to strengthen their institutions of governance, reduce corruption, combat terrorism, support economic growth, and counter narcotics. We continue to actively support an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process of reconciliation.

Maritime Navigation and Aviation

- We reaffirm the importance of maintaining a maritime order based upon the universally-agreed principles of international law. We remain committed to international cooperation to combat piracy and other maritime crime, consistent with international law and internationally recognized principles of jurisdiction in international waters. We are deeply concerned by tensions in the East and South China Sea. We oppose any unilateral attempt by any party to assert its territorial or maritime claims through the use of intimidation, coercion or force. We call on all parties to clarify and pursue their territorial and maritime claims in accordance with international law. We support the rights of claimants to seek peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including through legal dispute settlement mechanisms. We also support confidence-building measures. We underscore the importance of the freedom of navigation and overflight and also the effective management of civil air traffic based on international law and International Civil Aviation Organization standards and practices.

Other Issues

- We reaffirm our commitment to the protection and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

including religious freedom, for all persons. We recognise the need to show unprecedented resolve to promote gender equality, to end all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, to end child, early and forced marriage and to promote full participation and empowerment of all women and girls. We look forward to the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict taking place in London later this month.

- We reiterate our condemnation of terrorism and our commitment to cooperate in all relevant fora to prevent and respond to terrorism effectively, and in a comprehensive manner, while respecting human rights and the rule of law. We condemn the kidnapping of hundreds of schoolgirls by Boko Haram as an unconscionable crime and intend do everything possible to support the Nigerian government to return these young women to their homes and to bring the perpetrators to justice.
- We confirm that non-proliferation/disarmament issues remain a top priority and welcome the G–7 Non-proliferation Directors Group statement issued today.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom in Brussels, Belgium
June 5, 2014

President Obama. Good afternoon, everybody. It is good to be here with my great friend and partner, Prime Minister David Cameron. Earlier this afternoon we concluded our summit with our fellow G–7 leaders. And I want to thank His Majesty King Philippe, the Prime Minister, as well as the Belgian people for welcoming us back to Brussels.

David and I also just had the opportunity to meet and discuss some pressing challenges, including Syria, Libya, and Iran, as well as the process of ending our combat mission in Afghanistan. We spoke about the deepening partnership that we have on issues like Nigeria, in support of our shared goal of safely returning the kidnapped girls to their families. But what I want to focus on briefly, before we take questions, are two issues that dominated our discussion over the last 2 days, and that's the situation in Ukraine and energy security.

Originally, of course, our summit was supposed to be in Sochi. But after Russia's actions in Ukraine, our nations united quickly around a common strategy. We suspended Russia from the G–8, and we canceled the Sochi meeting, making this the first G–7 held without Russia in some 20 years. All seven of our nations have taken steps to impose costs on Russia for its behavior. Today, in contrast to a growing global economy, a sluggish Russian economy is even weaker because of the choices made by the Russia's leadership. Meanwhile, our nations continue to stand united in our support and assistance to the Ukrainian people. And the G–7 summit was an occasion for me, David, and our fellow leaders to ensure that we're in lockstep going forward.

On Ukraine, I shared the results of my meeting yesterday with President-elect Poroshenko. Like so many Ukrainians, he wants to forge closer ties with Europe and the United States, but also recognizes that Ukraine will benefit from a constructive relationship with Russia. So I believe his Inauguration provides an opportunity, particularly since he has demonstrated a commitment to reach out to the East and pursue reforms. Russia needs to seize that opportunity. Russia needs to recognize that President-elect Poroshenko is the legitimately elected leader of Ukraine and engage the Government in Kiev.

Given its influence over the militants in Ukraine, Russia continues to have a responsibility to convince them to end their violence,

lay down their weapons, and enter into a dialogue with the Ukrainian Government. On the other hand, if Russia's provocations continue, it's clear from our discussions here that the G–7 nations are ready to impose additional costs on Russia.

I also briefed David on the new initiative I announced in Warsaw to bolster the security of our NATO allies, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as our focus on building counterterrorism capabilities across the Middle East and North Africa. David will be hosting the next NATO summit in Wales in September, and I appreciated him updating me on the preparations for that summit. We agree that it's going to be an opportunity for every ally to make sure they're carrying their share and investing in the capabilities our alliance needs for the future.

Now, the situation in Ukraine has also highlighted the need for greater energy security. At the G–7, we agreed to help Ukraine reduce its energy risks to include diversifying its supplies. We're going to help countries in Central and Eastern Europe strengthen their energy security as well. And I—and following the review I called for in the United States earlier this year, every G–7 country will conduct an energy assessment to identify the possible impact of any potential disruptions and to offer ways we can better prevent disruptions and recover from them more quickly.

Related to this, we agreed at the G–7 to continue to lead by example in the fight against climate change, which poses a danger to our environment, our economies, and our national security. I made it clear that the United States will continue to do our part. Earlier this week, we took a major step, proposing new standards that, for the first time, would limit carbon pollution from our existing power plants. This is one of the most ambitious steps that any nation has taken to combat climate change. It would reduce carbon emissions from our electricity sector by 30 percent. It will help us meet the commitments that we made, when I first came into office, at Copenhagen. And it will improve our public health. It's also going to be good for our economy by helping to create more clean energy jobs and ultimately lower electricity bills for Americans. So it's the right thing to do.

This builds on the steps we've taken over the past 5 years to invest more in renewables like solar and wind, raise fuel standards for our cars and trucks, and make our homes and businesses more energy efficient. And today, we're holding our carbon emissions to levels not seen in nearly 20 years. So we're making important progress, but my action plan for climate change indicates that we've got to keep at it and do more.

I know this is a cause that David is also passionate about. We agree that every nation has to do its share. All the major economies, including the G–7 and emerging markets like China, need to show leadership as we work on a new global climate agreement. And that includes putting forward by March of next year ambitious, long-term targets for reducing emissions.

So again, I want to thank Prime Minister Cameron and our fellow leaders for our work here together in Brussels. David, I believe that whenever our two nations stand together, it can lead a world that is more secure and more prosperous and more just. And we'll be reminded of that again tomorrow in Normandy as we mark the 70th anniversary of D-day.

On that day, like so many others, American and British troops stood together and fought valiantly alongside our allies. It didn't just help to win the war, they helped to turn the tide of human history and are the reason that we can stand here today in a free Europe and with the freedoms our nations enjoy. So theirs is the legacy that our two nations and our great alliance continue to uphold. And I'm grateful to have a fine partner in David in making that happen.

Thank you, David.

Prime Minister Cameron. Thank you. And good afternoon. And I'm delighted to be here with you today, Barack. As we stand together in Europe on the 70th anniversary of the D-day landings, we should remind the world of the strength and steadfastness of the bond between the United Kingdom and the United States.

Seventy years ago, as you just said, our countries stood like two rocks of freedom and democracy in the face of Nazi tyranny. Seventy years ago tonight, thousands of young British and American soldiers, with their Canadian and Free French counterparts, were preparing to cross the channel in the greatest liberation force that the world has ever known. Those young men were united in purpose: to restore democracy and freedom to continental Europe, to free by force of arms ancient European nations, and to allow the nations and peoples of Europe to chart their destiny in the world.

Thousands of those young men paid the ultimate price, and we honor their memory today and tomorrow. Shortly after D-day, my own grandfather was wounded and came home. We will never forget what they did and the debt that we owe them for the peace and the freedom that we enjoy on this continent.

Today, in a new century, our two democracies continue to stand for and to uphold the same values in the world: democracy, liberty, the rule of law. And day in, day out, our people work together to uphold those values right across the globe. And that approach has been at the heart of what we've discussed here at the G–7 and in our bilateral meeting today.

We've talked about one of the greatest opportunities we have to turbocharge the global economy by concluding trade deals, including the EU-U.S. deal, which would be the biggest of them all: a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership that would create growth and jobs, a deal that could be worth up to £10 billion a year for Britain alone. It would help to secure our long-term economic success and generate a better future for hard-working families back at home. That is why I was so determined to launch those negotiations a year ago in Lough Erne. And since then, we've made steady progress, but we've got to keep our eyes on the huge prize on offer and not get bogged down.

We also discussed what I believe is the greatest threat that we face: how we counter extremism and the threat that terrorist groups operating elsewhere pose to the safety of our people, both at home and abroad. This year we will bring our troops home from Afghanistan. They can be proud of what they've achieved over the last decade: denying terrorists the safe haven from which to plot attacks against Britain or the United States. But at the same time, as we've reduced the threat from that region, so Al Qaida franchises have grown in other parts of the world. Many of these groups are focused on the countries where they operate, but they still pose a risk to our people, our businesses, and our interests.

Barack and I share the same view of how we tackle this threat in the fragile regions of the world where terrorist networks seek a foothold. As I've said before, our approach must be tough, patient, intelligent, and based on strong international partnerships. So when it comes to Syria, now the number-one destination for jihadists anywhere in the world, we've agreed to intensify our efforts to address the threat of foreign fighters traveling to and from Syria. We'll be introducing new measures in the U.K. to prosecute those who plan and train for terrorism abroad.

And here at the G–7, we've agreed to do more to work with Syria's neighbors to strengthen border security and to disrupt the terrorist financing that funds these jihadist training camps.

In Libya, we want to help the Government as it struggles to overcome the disastrous legacy of Qaddafi's misrule and to build a stable, peaceful, and prosperous future. Barack and I have both recently appointed Envoys who will be working together to support efforts to reach a much-needed political settlement. And we are fulfilling our commitment to train the Libyan security forces, with the first tranche of recruits due to begin their training in the U.K. this month.

In Nigeria, we're both committed to supporting the Nigerian Government and its neighbors as they confront the scourge of Boko Haram. The kidnap of the Chobok girls was an act of pure evil, and Britain and the United States have provided immediate assistance in the search. In the longer term, we stand ready to provide more practical assistance to help the

Nigerians and the region to strengthen their defense and security institutions and to develop the expertise needed to counter these barbaric extremists.

And finally, as Barack said, we had an important discussion on Ukraine and relations with Russia. From the outset of this crisis, the G–7 nations have stood united, clear in our support for the Ukrainian people and their right to choose their own future, and firm in our message to President Putin that Russia's actions are completely unacceptable and totally at odds with the values of this group of democracies. That is why Russia no longer has a seat at the table here with us.

At this summit, we were clear about three things. First, the status quo is unacceptable; the continuing destabilization of eastern Ukraine must stop. Second, there are a set of things that need to happen. President Putin must recognize the legitimate election of President Poroshenko. He must stop arms crossing the border into Ukraine. He must cease Russian support for separatist groups. And third, if these things don't happen, then sectoral sanctions will follow. The next month will be vital in judging if President Putin has taken these steps, and that is what I will urge President Putin to do when I meet him later today.

Finally, we discussed the cancer eating away at the world's economic and political systems: corruption. Corruption is the archenemy of democracy and development. The best way to fight corruption and to drive growth is through what I call the three T's: greater transparency, fair tax systems, and freer trade. That was at the heart of our G–8 agenda in Lough Erne, and today we agreed to push for more action on fair tax systems, freer trade, and greater transparency, things that are now hardwired into these international gatherings this year and for many years to come.

Thank you.

President Obama. All right. We've got a couple questions from each press delegation. We'll start with Jeff Mason at Reuters.

Jeff.

France-U.S. Relations/BNP Paribas/France's Proposed Sale of Mistral Helicopter Carriers to Russia/Ukraine

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You're going to France later this evening. Since you last had French President Hollande visit in a state visit earlier this year, a lot of tensions have arisen in the relationship, including on BNP Paribas. The French say that a potential multibillion-dollar fine on that bank could affect the global economy and could affect trade talks. Do you believe those concerns are valid? And how do you expect to address them with him tonight and also U.S. concerns about the French selling Mistral warships to Russia?

And to the Prime Minister, do you feel isolated, sir, among the EU—among your EU leaders about your position on Jean-Claude Juncker as the European Commission President? And who would you like to see get the job? And separately, do you feel any pressure from President Obama about your position on keeping the U.K. in the EU? Thank you.

President Obama. First of all, the relationship between the United States and France has never been stronger. On a whole range of issues, we're seeing intense cooperation. And I'm looking forward to seeing President Hollande this evening to talk about a range of issues and continue some of the work that was done here in Brussels.

My answer on the banking case is short and simple. The tradition of the United States is that the President does not meddle in prosecutions. We don't call the Attorney General—I do not pick up the phone and tell the Attorney General how to prosecute cases that have been brought. I do not push for settlements of cases that have been brought. Those are decisions that are made by an independent Department of Justice.

I've communicated that to President Hollande. This is not a unique position on my part. Perhaps it is a different tradition than exists in other countries, but it is designed to make sure that the rule of law is not in any way impacted by political expediency. And so this will be determined by U.S. attorneys in discussion with

representatives of the bank, and I'll read about it in the newspapers just like everybody else.

Q. He said he's going to confront you about it tonight.

President Obama. He'll hear the same answer from me tonight as he just heard at this podium.

Q. And Mistral?

President Obama. I have expressed some concerns—and I don't think I'm alone in this—about continuing significant trade—defense deals with Russia at a time when they have violated basic international law and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of their neighbors. So President Hollande understands my position. I recognize that this is a big deal. I recognize that the jobs in France are important. I think it would have been preferable to press the pause button. President Hollande so far has made a different decision. And that does not negate the broader cooperation that we've had with France with respect to its willingness to work with us on sanctions to discourage President Putin from engaging in further destabilizing actions and, hopefully, to encourage him to move in a more constructive direction.

We are at a point where Mr. Putin has the chance to get back into a lane of international law. He has a President in Poroshenko who he can negotiate directly with. Having spoken to President Poroshenko this morning—or yesterday morning, it's clear that he recognizes that Ukraine needs to have a good relationship with Russia, but also rightly affirms the right of Ukraine to engage with the rest of the world.

And the steps that David outlined earlier and that the G–7 unanimously agrees with, which is for Mr. Putin to take—seize this moment, recognize Poroshenko is the legitimate leader of Ukraine, cease the support of separatists and the flow of arms, work with Ukraine to engage those in the east during this process of constitutional and economic reform—if Mr. Putin takes those steps, then it is possible for us to begin to rebuild trust between Russia and its neighbors and Europe. Should he fail to do so, though, there are going to be additional consequences.

And one of the important things that came out of this meeting today was the recognition on the part of all of us that we can't simply allow drift. The mere fact that some of Mr.—some of the Russian soldiers have moved back off the border and that Russia is now destabilizing Ukraine through surrogates, rather than overtly and explicitly, does not mean that we can afford 3 months or 4 months or 6 months of continued violence and conflict in eastern Ukraine.

We will have a chance to see what Mr. Putin does over the next 2, 3, 4 weeks. And if he remains on the current course, then we've already indicated the kinds of actions that we're prepared to take.

All right?

Prime Minister Cameron. You asked a couple of questions about Europe. It's worth setting the context. We've just had a set of European elections where—to take two countries at random, France and Britain—in France, the Front National, an openly anti-European party, won; and an anti-European party in my country won. And when these things happen you can stick your head in the sand and wish these results would go away, or you can have a strategy for addressing the concerns of the people that you represent in your country. I have a strategy to represent and understand and reflect those concerns.

And that's why I think it's important that we have people running the institutions of Europe who understand the need for change, the need for reform. And I would argue that that is a view that is quite widely shared amongst other heads of government and heads of state in the European Union.

As for Britain's future, I'm very clear what I want to achieve—is to secure Britain's place in a reformed European Union. And I have a strategy for delivering that. It is about renegotiating our position. It's about recovering some important powers. It's about making some significant changes and then putting that decision in a referendum to the British people, but very much recommending that we stay in a reformed European Union.

Again, it's a strategy for dealing with an issue, which, I think, if we just walked away from it, we'd see Britain drift towards the exits, and I don't want that to happen.

Q. Do you feel any pressure from the United States about that?

Prime Minister Cameron. No. We have had good discussions about these issues as we discuss everything else.

President Obama. Absolutely.

Prime Minister Cameron. Let's have a question from the BBC.

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Ukraine/Scottish Independence Referendum/European Union

Q. [*Inaudible*]—from the BBC. Mr. President, even if you don't have a meeting scheduled face to face with Vladimir Putin yourself, are you going to end up talking with him face to face in France? And do you see real possibilities of opening up a path away from the crisis by you engaging with him?

Britain is potentially facing, Mr. President, two major decisions: whether or not Scotland stays part of the United Kingdom and whether the United Kingdom stays a part of the European Union. What do those decisions mean to you and to the people of the United States?

Prime Minister, you'll be the first leader, I think, after this summit to engage with Vladimir Putin face to face. Despite everything you've said, is there something of an olive branch in your hand? After all, Mr. Putin has not actually denounced the electoral process which brought the new President to power in Ukraine. Is there a way out, and is that what you're really going to be exploring with him this evening?

And do you accept that Germany may not come to your aid and stop Jean-Claude Juncker becoming Commission President? Will that actually, potentially blow your entire strategy off course? You think you may be able to negotiate a brilliant reform of the European Union, but if Jean-Claude Juncker becomes President of the European Commission, will your credibility be so damaged in Britain that people may simply vote to leave the Union?

Finally, who are you more afraid of, Angela Merkel or Theresa May? [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Cameron. Great question. Right. Do you want to go? Let me take those.

First of all, my meeting with Vladimir Putin, I think it's just important to have this communication about some very important messages about what's happening now is not acceptable, about the changes that need to take place. I think, as the President said, there is an opportunity for diplomacy to play a role and to chart a path, because we've had these elections, the Ukrainian people have chosen a President. He's a capable man, and it's quite possible that he could have a proper relationship with Putin and there could be a proper relationship between Ukraine and Russia. But change is needed in order for that to happen, and that's the message that I will be delivering this evening.

In terms of your other questions, look, on this issue of who runs the European Commission, the European institutions, what matters is people who understand the need for change, who understand the need for reform, who realize that if things go on as they have, this Union is not going to work for its citizens. And that was the message that I think was loudly received in these European elections.

As for who—as you put it, Angela Merkel or Theresa May—look, I'm very fortunate in my life to work with some extremely strong and capable women, of which they are undoubtedly two. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. I have no doubt that I'll see Mr. Putin. And he and I have always had a businesslike relationship, and it is entirely appropriate that he is there to commemorate D-day, given the extraordinary sacrifices that were made by the people of the Soviet Union during World War II.

And should we have the opportunity to talk, I will be repeating the same message that I've been delivering to him throughout this crisis. Keep in mind that although we haven't had formal meetings, I've spoken to him by phone repeatedly from the outset of the protests in the Maidan. And my message has been very consistent, and that is that Russia has a legitimate interest in what happens in Ukraine,

given that it's on its border and given its historical ties, but ultimately, it is up to the people of Ukraine to make their own decisions; that Russian Armed Forces annexing pieces of a neighbor is illegal and violates international law and the kinds of destabilizing activities that we now see, funded and encouraged by Russia, are illegal and are not constructive; and that there is a path in which Russia has the capacity to engage directly with President Poroshenko now. He should take it. If he does not, if he continues a strategy of undermining the sovereignty of Ukraine, then we have no choice but to respond.

And perhaps he's been surprised by the degree of unity that's been displayed. I do think the fact that he did not immediately denounce the outcome of the May 25 election perhaps offers the prospect that he's moving in a new direction. But I think we have to see what he does and not what he says.

With respect to the future of the United Kingdom, obviously, ultimately, this is up to the people of Great Britain. In the case of Scotland, there's a referendum process in place, and it's up to the people of Scotland.

I would say that the United Kingdom has been an extraordinary partner to us. From the outside, at least, it looks like things have worked pretty well. And we obviously have a deep interest in making sure that one of the closest allies that we will ever have remains strong, robust, united, and an effective partner. But ultimately, these are decisions that are to be made by the folks there.

With respect to the EU, we share a strategic vision with Great Britain on a whole range of international issues, and so it's always encouraging for us to know that Great Britain has a seat at the table in the larger European project. I think in light of the events that we're going to be commemorating tomorrow, it's important to recall that it was the steadfastness of Great Britain that, in part, allows us to be here in Brussels, in the seat of a unified and extraordinarily prosperous Europe. And it's hard for me to imagine that project going well in the absence of Great Britain. And I think it's also hard for me to imagine that it would be advantageous for Great Britain to be excluded from political decisions that have an enormous impact on its economic and political life.

So this is why we have elections, and we'll see the arguments made, and I'm sure that the people of Great Britain will make the right decision.

Stephen Collinson [Agence France-Presse].

Release of Sgt. Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, From Captivity by Taliban Forces in Afghanistan

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Have you been surprised by the backlash that's been whipped up by your decision to do a deal to free Bowe Bergdahl? And what do you think is motivating that? In retrospect, do you think you could have done more to consult with Congress or announce the deal in a way that might have spared him and his family being caught up in the political crossfire?

And, Prime Minister, how do you respond to criticism that your decision to meet Vladimir Putin and his meetings with other key European leaders are actually devaluing the punishment that was meted out to Russia by throwing it out of the G–8? And finally, should Qatar be deprived of the right to host the World Cup? And if so, is England willing to host it? [*Laughter*]

President Obama. I'm never surprised by controversies that are whipped up in Washington. [*Laughter*] Right? That's par for the course. But I'll repeat what I said 2 days ago. We have a basic principle: We do not leave anybody wearing the American uniform behind.

We had a prisoner of war whose health had deteriorated, and we were deeply concerned about. And we saw an opportunity, and we seized it. And I make no apologies for that.

We had discussed with Congress the possibility that something like this might occur. But because of the nature of the folks that we were dealing with and the fragile nature of these negotiations, we felt it was important to go ahead and do what we did. And we're now explaining to Congress the details of how we moved forward. But this basic principle that we don't leave anybody behind and this basic recognition that that often means prisoner exchanges

with enemies is not unique to my administration. It dates back to the beginning of our Republic.

And with respect to how we announced it, I think it was important for people to understand that this is not some abstraction, this is not a political football. You have acouple of parents whose kid volunteered to fight in a distant land, who they hadn't seen in 5 years and weren't sure whether they'd ever see again. And as Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces, I am responsible for those kids. And I get letters from parents who say, if you are in fact sending my child into war, make sure that that child is being taken care of. And I write too many letters to folks who unfortunately don't see their children again after fighting a war.

I make absolutely no apologies for making sure that we get back a young man to his parents and that the American people understand that this is somebody's child and that we don't condition whether or not we make the effort to try to get them back.

Did you have a second question?

Q. For the Prime Minister.

President Obama. Oh, okay. Well, I—you can ask him about football.

Prime Minister Cameron. On the issue of—first of all, on the issue of meeting President Putin, I think it's right to have this dialogue, particularly if you have a clear message and a clear point to make. And I think there's a world of difference between having a dialogue with President Putin and excluding someone from an institution as significant as the G–8, now the G–7. I think it was absolutely right to exclude Russia. I think I was one of the first G–8 leaders to make that point. It was totally the right decision, and there's a world of difference between the meeting we've just held, which did not include Russia, and having a bilateral meeting where we discuss these issues about Ukraine.

On the issue of football, we should let the investigation run its course, but of course, England is the home of football as it's the home and inventor of many sports—tennis, rugby, golf, skiing, table tennis, cricket. I don't think we can lay claim to——

President Obama. Baseball, basketball. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Cameron. Well, I'm not sure that it goes all the way——

President Obama. I just want to be clear here.

Prime Minister Cameron. So we're always happy to provide a home for these sports.

President Obama. You did invent the English language, though.

Prime Minister Cameron. We did. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. We appreciate it.

Prime Minister Cameron. You've made a few changes.

President Obama. We have. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Cameron. You've made a few changes to it, but they don't hold us back. [*Laughter*] Final question from Rageh Omaar of ITV, I think.

U.S.-European Unity in Response to the Situation in Ukraine/International Sanctions Against Russia

Q. Mr. President, Rageh Omaar, ITV News. You spoke about the importance for you and your allies to be in complete lockstep on the crisis in Ukraine. If this crisis shows no sign of deescalating, you say that the next step will be to—sectoral sanctions. Are you confident that you will be in lockstep with all of the European allies and G–7 allies? Because there will be costs and consequences for them and their economies as sanctions get widened.

Prime Minister, my question to you is, you spoke forcefully about the threat of extremist ideology at home and abroad, described it as the greatest threat to Britain and its allies. And even by your own government's estimate, there are several hundred British citizens learning to fight and kill in Syria. With regard to extremist ideology at home, particularly in schools—where there's been a lot of concern—don't you think it's not only unseemly, but wrong for members of your own government to engage in an argument about it whether the priority should be protecting British children against extremist ideology? Thank you.

Prime Minister Cameron. First of all, let me just say on the issue of sectoral sanctions and this issue of lockstep between the U.S. and countries of the European Union, I think it has been very striking, actually, over the last few months how we've been able to stay as unified as we have. And I pay tribute to Barack for his understanding of how important it is for us to try and work together and deliver these messages together. And I think it has surprised people. And I hope it has surprised President Putin.

In terms of tackling extremism, I mean, I set up the U.K. Extremism Task Force, which I chaired after the appalling murder of Lee Rigby, because I wanted to make sure that Government was doing everything that it could to drive extremism out of our schools, out of our colleges, off campuses, out of prisons—in every part of national life. And I think it's very important that we recognize that you've got to deal not only with violent extremism, but also the sink of extremism, of tolerating extremist views from which violence can grow. And the whole Government is signed up to that agenda and is driving through changes to deliver that agenda.

As for these issues for the last day or so, I will get to the bottom of who has said what and what has happened, and I'll sort it all out once I've finished these important meetings I'm having here.

President Obama. Well, I think what has been striking is the degree of solidarity between the United States and Europe in dealing with the Ukraine crisis. I think a lot of people anticipated very early on that immediately, the two sides would fly apart. And in fact, there has been consistency in affirming the core values that have been at the heart of a united and prosperous Europe. And that's despite the very real economic consequences that can arise by applying sanctions against Russia.

I think Europeans understand that the reason we've seen such extraordinary growth and peace on this continent has to do with certain values and certain principles that have to be upheld. And when they are so blatantly disregarded, the choice is clear: Europeans have to stand up for those ideals and principles even if it creates some economic inconvenience.

Now, having said that, sectoral sanctions are broader; they'd be more significant. Our technical teams have been consulting with the European Commission to identify sanctions that would maximize impact on Russia and minimize adverse impacts on European countries. And that work is ongoing. My hope is, is that we don't have to exercise them because Mr. Putin has made some better decisions. I think, by the way, it would also be better for Russia, because the Russian economy is not in good shape right now. We've seen significant capital flight just from the sanctions that we've already applied; that could easily worsen. And if we have sectoral sanctions, I think it will inevitably hit Russia a lot worse than it hits Europe, which have much more diversified and resilient economies.

Do I expect unanimity among the 28 EU members? I have now been President for 5½ years, and I've learned a thing or two about the European Union, the European Commission, the European Council. Sometimes, I get them mixed up——

Prime Minister Cameron. Welcome to the club. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. ——but the basic principle that if you've got 28 people sitting around a table, that not everybody is going to agree, I think we take that for granted. And I also think that if in fact we have to move to sectoral sanctions, it's important to take individual country sensitivities in mind and make sure that everybody is ponying up, that everybody is bearing their fair share. Some people are going to be more concerned about defense relations, some people are going to be more concerned about the financial sector, others might be more concerned about trade in basic goods and services. And so that's the technical work that is being done.

Again, my hope is, is that we don't have to use it. But I've been heartened by the steadfastness of Europe thus far. I think that people underestimate the degree to which, given the history of this continent—certainly in the 20th century—that people are not interested in see-

ing any chinks in the armor, and they recognize that that's worth working for.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you, David.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:35 p.m. in the Justus Lipsius Building. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo of Belgium; and Robert and Jani Bergdahl, parents of Sgt. Bergdahl. Prime Minister Cameron referred to the United Kingdom's Special Envoy to Libya Jonathan N. Powell; U.S. Special Envoy to Libya David M. Satterfield; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; and Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Women and Equalities Theresa M. May of the United Kingdom. Reporters referred to former Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker of Luxembourg, a candidate in the race for President of the European Commission.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Sylvia Mathews Burwell as Secretary of Health and Human Services
June 5, 2014

I applaud the strong, bipartisan majority of Senators who today confirmed Sylvia Mathews Burwell as America's next Secretary of Health and Human Services. Sylvia is a proven manager who knows how to deliver results, and over her career, she has built deep relationships with Democrats and Republicans alike. I'm confident Sylvia's unparalleled experience will serve her well in her new role as she works to ensure the safety of our food and drug supply, protect our Nation from outbreaks or bioterror attacks, keep America at the forefront of medical research, and make sure every American has access to quality, affordable health care.

Joint Statement by Group of Seven Leaders: The Brussels G–7 Summit Declaration
June 5, 2014

1. We, the Leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, met in Brussels on 4 and 5 June 2014. This Group came together because of shared beliefs and shared responsibilities. We are profoundly committed to the values of freedom and democracy, and their universality and to fostering peace and security. We believe in open economies, open societies and open governments, including respect for human rights and the rule of law, as the basis for lasting growth and stability. For nearly forty years, we have shown through our actions that collective will can be a powerful catalyst for progress. Our efforts to address major global challenges have also been guided by a commitment to transparency, accountability and partnership with other concerned members of the international community. We remain bound together as a group by these values and this vision. Guided by these shared values and principles, we will continue to work together to meet the challenges of our times. We thank the European Union for hosting this Summit and welcome Germany's Presidency.

Global Economy

2. Supporting growth and jobs remains our top priority. The global economy has strengthened since we met at Lough Erne, downside risks remain which will need to be managed carefully. Advanced economies are recovering, but continued and sustained growth is needed to bring down unemployment, particularly among young people and the long-term unemployed.

3. We will take further steps to support strong, sustainable and balanced growth, with a common goal of increasing the resilience of

our economies. We will present ambitious and comprehensive growth strategies at the G–20 Summit in Brisbane, to include action across a broad front including in the areas of investment, small and medium enterprises, employment and participation of women, and trade and innovation, in addition to macroeconomic policies. We will continue to implement our fiscal strategies flexibly to take into account near-term economic conditions, so as to support economic growth and job creation, while putting debt as a share of GDP on a sustainable path.

4. We agreed that 2014 will be the year in which we focus on substantially completing key aspects of the core financial reforms that we undertook in response to the global financial crisis: building resilient financial institutions; ending too-big-to-fail; addressing shadow banking risks; and making derivatives markets safer. We remain committed to the agreed G–20 roadmap for work on relevant shadow banking activities with clear deadlines and actions to progress rapidly towards strengthened and comprehensive oversight and regulation appropriate to the systemic risks posed. We will remain vigilant in the face of global risk and vulnerabilities. And we remain committed to tackling tax avoidance including through the G–20/Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Base Erosion and Profit Shifting Action Plan as set out in the agreed timetable, and tax evasion, where we look forward to the rapid implementation of the new single global standard for automatic exchange of tax information. We call on all jurisdictions to take similar action.

5. Trade and investment are key engines for jobs and growth. We reaffirm our commitment to keep our markets open and to fight all forms of protectionism including through standstill and rollback. We are committed to strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system. We will protect and promote investment and maintain a level playing field for all investors. International standards for public export finance are crucial for avoiding or reducing distortions in global trade. Since we met at Lough Erne, we have made substantial progress on major trade negotiations: Canada-EU; Japan-EU; Canada-Japan; EU-US; the Trans-Pacific Partnership; and the Trade in Services Agreement. We aim to finalise them as soon as possible. We are committed to liberalising trade in environmental goods and services, including through an Environmental Goods agreement. We will work to conclude an expanded Information Technology Agreement as soon as possible. These agreements and initiatives can help support and will be consistent with the multilateral trading system and act as building blocks for future multilateral deals. We welcome the successful outcomes of the 9th World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference. We will prioritise full and swift implementation of the Bali Package, in particular the Trade Facilitation Agreement. We will continue to provide, within our current Aid for Trade commitments, substantial support and capacity building to help implement this agreement, in particular to the benefit of the Least Developed Countries. We fully support efforts in the WTO to secure swift agreement to a balanced work programme for completing the Doha Round.

Energy

6. The use of energy supplies as a means of political coercion or as a threat to security is unacceptable. The crisis in Ukraine makes plain that energy security must be at the centre of our collective agenda and requires a step change to our approach to diversifying energy supplies and modernising our energy infrastructure. Under the Rome G–7 Energy Initiative, we will identify and implement concrete domestic policies by each of our governments separately and together, to build a more competitive, diversified, resilient and low-carbon energy system. This work will be based on the core principles agreed by our Ministers of Energy on May 5–6 2014, in Rome:

- Development of flexible, transparent and competitive energy markets, including gas markets.

- Diversification of energy fuels, sources and routes, and encouragement of indigenous sources of energy supply.
- Reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, and accelerating the transition to a low carbon economy as a key contribution to sustainable energy security.
- Enhancing energy efficiency in demand and supply, and demand response management.
- Promoting deployment of clean and sustainable energy technologies and continued investment in research and innovation.
- Improving energy systems resilience by promoting infrastructure modernization and supply and demand policies that help withstand systemic shocks.
- Putting in place emergency response systems, including reserves and fuel substitution for importing countries, in case of major energy disruptions.

7. Based on these principles we will take the following immediate actions:

- We will complement the efforts of the European Commission to develop emergency energy plans for winter 2014–2015 at a regional level.
- Working with international organisations such as the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency, and the international financial institutions, we will supply technical assistance, including leveraging the private sector, and facilitate exchanges with Ukraine and other European countries seeking to develop indigenous hydrocarbon resources and renewable energies, as well as to improve energy efficiency.
- We will conduct assessments of our energy security resilience and enhance our joint efforts, including on critical infrastructure, transit routes, supply chains and transport.
- We will ask the IEA, in close cooperation with the European Commission, to present by the end of 2014 options for individual and collective actions of the G–7 in the field of gas security.

8. We will also:

- Promote the use of low carbon technologies (renewable energies, nuclear in the countries which opt to use it, and carbon capture and storage) including those which work as a base load energy source; and
- Promote a more integrated Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) market, including through new supplies, the development of transport infrastructures, storage capabilities, and LNG terminals, and further promotion of flexible gas markets, including relaxation of destination clauses and producer-consumer dialogue.

9. We ask our Energy Ministers to take forward this Rome G–7 Energy Initiative and report back to us in 2015.

Climate Change

10. Urgent and concrete action is needed to address climate change, as set out in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment Report. We therefore remain committed to low-carbon economies with a view to doing our part to limit effectively the increase in global temperature below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. We affirm our strong determination to adopt in 2015 a global agreement—a new protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the convention applicable to all parties—that is ambitious, inclusive and reflects changing global circumstances. We will communicate our intended nationally determined contributions well in advance of the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris (by the first quarter of 2015 by those Parties ready to do so) and call on others to follow our lead. We welcome the Climate Summit of the United Nations Secretary General in September and his invitation to all Parties to prepare for

ambitious contributions and to deliver concrete action to reduce emissions and strengthen resilience. We look forward to a successful Summit.

11. We reaffirm our support for the Copenhagen Accord commitments to mobilise USD 100 billion per year by 2020 from a wide variety of sources, both public and private, to address the climate mitigation and adaptation needs of developing countries in the context of their meaningful and transparent mitigation actions. We welcome the adoption of the Green Climate Fund's operating rules and the decision to commence its initial resource mobilisation in the coming months. We remain committed to the elimination of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and continued discussions in the OECD on how export credits can contribute to our common goal to address climate change. We will strengthen efforts to improve measurement, reporting, verification and accounting of emissions and improve the reporting of international climate finance flows, consistent with agreed decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We will work together and with others to phase down the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFC) under the Montreal Protocol. We will also continue to take action to promote the rapid deployment of climate-friendly and safe alternatives in motor vehicle air-conditioning and we will promote public procurement of climate-friendly HFC alternatives.

Development

12. The pursuit of sustainable and inclusive development and greater prosperity in all countries remains a foundational commitment that unites our people and our countries. We continue to implement the commitments we have made at previous Summits. To be accountable we will provide a report in 2015 on progress toward their attainment.

13. We commit to work with all partners to agree an ambitious and universal post-2015 agenda, anchored in a single set of clear and measurable goals. That agenda should complete unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals. It should be centred on people and focused both on the eradication of extreme poverty, promoting development and on balancing the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development, including climate change. It should also promote peace and security, democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights for all. We are committed to build a global partnership with shared responsibility and mutual accountability to ensure its implementation. We await the synthesis report of the United Nations Secretary General in the second half of 2014. We welcome the African Union's common position.

14. We will continue to promote inclusive and resilient growth in Africa, working with governments and citizens in Africa to enhance governance and transparency, improve infrastructure, notably in the energy sector, eliminate trade barriers, facilitate trade and investment, and strengthen the responsible and sustainable management of natural resources and the revenues they generate. We welcome the active role of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development in the process of reforming the Africa Partnership Forum.

15. Security and development are the prerequisite of a lasting peace in regions affected by the scourge of war, terrorism, organized crime, corruption, instability and poverty, notably the Sahel region, Somalia, Nigeria, South Sudan and Central African Republic. We welcome efforts by African partners and the African Union, supported by the international community, aimed at building their capacities to respond to crises and support stabilisation.

16. We confirm our strong commitment to the Deauville Partnership and our support to Arab countries in transition in their efforts to improve governance and stimulate inclusive growth and job creation, particularly for their youth and women. Our Foreign and Finance Ministers will meet in the margins of United Nations General Assembly, and the International Monetary Fund/World Bank Annual Meetings, to take forward the Partnership.

17. We remain committed to work towards common global standards that raise extractives transparency, which ensure disclosure of companies' payments to all governments. We welcome the progress made among G–7 members to implement quickly such standards. These global standards should continue to move towards project-level reporting. Those governments that are signing up to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative standard will voluntarily report their revenues. We confirm our commitment to implement fully the extractive partnerships launched in 2013.

18. We today announce a new initiative on Strengthening Assistance for Complex Contract Negotiations (CONNEX) to provide developing country partners with extended and concrete expertise for negotiating complex commercial contracts, focusing initially on the extractives sector, and working with existing fora and facilities to avoid duplication, to be launched in New York in June and to deliver improvements by our next meeting, including as a first step a central resource hub that brings together information and guidance.

19. We will continue to work to tackle tax evasion andillicit flows of finance, including by supporting developing countries to strengthen their tax base and help create stable and sustainable states. We renew our commitment to deny safe haven to the proceeds of corruption, and to the recovery and return of stolen assets. We remain committed to prevent the misuse of companies and other legal arrangements such as trusts to hide financial flows stemming from corruption, tax evasion, money laundering, and other crimes, ensuring that beneficial ownership information is available in a timely fashion to financial intelligence units, tax collection and law enforcement agencies, for example through central registries or other appropriate mechanisms, leading by example in implementing the Financial Action Task Force and other relevant international standards and our national action plans in line with the principles we agreed at Lough Erne. Greater transparency in this area will help developing countries.

20. Recent events illustrate that corruption undermines trust in governments and limits economic growth. We will build on existing efforts, including in the G–20, to take additional steps to prevent this. We continue our engagement to and support of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank's Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative. We welcome the outcomes of the Ukraine Forum on Asset Recovery and look forward to the third Arab Forum on Asset Recovery. The G–7 remains committed to working with governments and global financial centres to follow up on asset recovery efforts.

21. We remain committed to the Muskoka Initiative on maternal, newborn and child health, and welcome the call made at the Saving Every Woman, Every Child Summit in Toronto to accelerate progress on this global priority. In addition we are committed to ensuring sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and ending child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation and other harmful practices. The health and well-being of women and children are improved through ensuring universal access to affordable, quality, essential health services, strengthening health, education and child protection systems and improving nutrition and access to immunisation. We recognise the impact of the GAVI Alliance (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation) and welcome its efforts to expand access to vaccines to an additional 300 million children during 2016–2020. We welcome Germany's offer to host the second replenishment in early 2015, reaffirm our commitment, and call on other public and private donors to contribute to the replenishment of the GAVI Alliance. We reaffirm our commitment to an AIDS free generation and to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to reduce the burden of these three major infectious diseases on eligible countries and regions.

22. To address the threat posed by infectious diseases, we support the Global Health Security Agenda and commit to working with partner countries to strengthen compliance with the World Health Organisation's (WHO)

International Health Regulations and enhance health security around the world. We commit to working across sectors to prevent, detect and respond to infectious diseases, whether naturally occurring, accidental, or the result of a deliberate act by a state or non-state actor. That includes building global capacity so that we are better prepared for threats such as the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa and working together, in close cooperation with WHO, to develop a Global Action Plan on antimicrobial resistance.

23. We continue to strongly support comprehensive approaches to achieve global food security and nutrition. We look forward to the second International Conference on Nutrition in November 2014 and the Expo Milan 2015, which will provide a platform for the global post-2015 debate on sustainability and food and nutrition security. We continue to support the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition under strong African leadership and the successful completion of principles for responsible agricultural investment by the Committee on World Food Security. These will better enable smallholder farmers, especially women, to benefit from sustainable rural development. We continue to support the consistent implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, including by building on the land partnerships we launched in 2013 and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme.

Ukraine

24. We welcome the successful conduct under difficult circumstances of the election in Ukraine on 25 May. The strong voter turnout underlined the determination of Ukraine's citizens to determine the future of their country. We welcome Petro Poroshenko as the President-elect of Ukraine and commend him for reaching out to all the people of Ukraine.

25. In the face of unacceptable interference in Ukraine's sovereign affairs by the Russian Federation, we stand by the Ukrainian government and people. We call upon the illegal armed groups to disarm. We encourage the Ukrainian authorities to maintain a measured approach in pursuing operations to restore law and order. We fully support the substantial contribution made by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the de-escalation of the crisis through the Special Monitoring Mission and other OSCE instruments. We commend the willingness of the Ukrainian authorities to continue the national dialogue in an inclusive manner. We welcome the "Memorandum of Peace and Unity" adopted by the Verkhovna Rada on 20 May and express the wish that it can be implemented rapidly. We also encourage the Ukrainian parliament and the Government of Ukraine to continue to pursue constitutional reform in order to provide a framework for deepening and strengthening democracy and accommodating the rights and aspirations of all people in all regions of Ukraine.

26. The G–7 are committed to continuing to work with Ukraine to support its economic development, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We encourage the fulfilment of Ukraine's commitment to pursue the difficult reforms that will be crucial to support economic stability and unlock private sector-led growth. We welcome the decision of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to approve a $17 billion programme for Ukraine, which will anchor other bilateral and multilateral assistance and loans, including around $18 billion foreseen to date from G–7 partners. We welcome the swift disbursement of macro-economic support for Ukraine. We support an international donor coordination mechanism to ensure effective delivery of economic assistance and we welcome the EU's intention to hold a high-level coordination meeting in Brussels. We welcome ongoing efforts to diversify Ukraine's sources of gas, including through recent steps in the EU towards enabling reverse gas flow capacities and look forward to the successful conclusion of the talks, facilitated by the European Commission, on gas transit and supply from the Russian Federation to Ukraine.

27. We are united in condemning the Russian Federation's continuing violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, and actions to de-stabilise eastern Ukraine are unacceptable and must stop. These actions violate fundamental principles of international law and should be a concern for all nations. We urge the Russian Federation to recognise the results of the election, complete the withdrawal of its military forces on the border with Ukraine, stop the flow of weapons and militants across the border and to exercise its influence among armed separatists to lay down their weapons and renounce violence. We call on the Russian Federation to meet the commitments it made in the Geneva Joint Statement and cooperate with the government of Ukraine as it implements its plans for promoting peace, unity and reform.

28. We confirm the decision by G–7 countries to impose sanctions on individuals and entities who have actively supported or implemented the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and who are threatening the peace, security and stability of Ukraine. We are implementing a strict policy of non-recognition with respect to Crimea/Sevastopol, in line with UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262. We stand ready to intensify targeted sanctions and to implement significant additional restrictive measures to impose further costs on Russia should events so require.

29. The projects funded by the donor community to convert the Chernobyl site into a stable and environmentally safe condition have reached an advanced stage of completion. While recognizing the complexity of these first of a kind projects, we call upon all concerned parties to make an additional effort to bring them to a satisfactory conclusion and call upon project parties to keep costs under control. This remains a high priority for us.

Syria

30. We strongly condemn the Assad regime's brutality which drives a conflict that has killed more than 160,000 people and left 9.3 million in need of humanitarian assistance. We denounce the 3 June sham presidential election: there is no future for Assad in Syria. We again endorse the Geneva Communiqué, which calls for a transitional governing body exercising full executive powers and agreed by mutual consent, based on a vision for a united, inclusive and democratic Syria. We strongly condemn the violations of international humanitarian law and human rights and indiscriminate artillery shelling and aerial bombardment by the Syrian regime. There is evidence that extremist groups have also perpetrated grave human rights abuses. All those responsible for such abuses must be held to account. We welcome the commitment of the National Coalition and Free Syrian Army to uphold international law. We deplore Russia and China's decision to veto the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution draft authorising referral to the International Criminal Court and demanding accountability for the serious and ongoing crimes committed in Syria.

31. We are committed to supporting the neighbouring countries bearing the burden of Syrian refugee inflows and deplore the failure to implement UNSC Resolution 2139 on humanitarian assistance. We urge all parties to the conflict to allow access to aid for all those in need, by the most direct routes, including across borders and conflict lines, and support further urgent action by the UNSC to that end. In our funding we decide to give particular support to humanitarian actors that can reach those most in need, including across borders. We call for the international community to meet the enormous funding needs of the UN appeals for Syria and its neighbours. We resolve to intensify our efforts to address the threat arising from foreign fighters travelling to Syria. We are deeply concerned by allegations of repeated chemical agent use and call on all parties in Syria to cooperate fully with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) fact-finding mission. We call on Syria to comply with its obligations under UNSC Resolution 2118, decisions of the Executive Council of the OPCW and the Chemical Weapons Convention to ensure the swift removal of its remaining chemical stockpile for destruction, and to destroy its production facilities immediately and answer all questions regarding its declaration to the OPCW.

Libya

32. We reaffirm our support for a free, prosperous and democratic Libya which will play its role in promoting regional stability. We express serious concern at the recent violence and urge all Libyans to engage with the political process through peaceful and inclusive means, underpinned by respect for the rule of law. We urge continued and coordinated engagement by the international community to support the Libyan transition and efforts to promote political dialogue, in coordination with the UN and with the UN Support Mission in Libya fulfilling its mandate in that respect. We ask all in the international community to respect fully Libyan's sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention in its affairs. In this framework, we commend the proposal of the High National Electoral Commission, endorsed by the General National Congress, to convene the elections on June 25. We emphasise the importance of these elections in restarting the political process and appreciate the vital work of the Constitution Drafting Assembly.

Mali and Central African Republic

33. We welcome the ceasefire signed on May 23 by the Malian Government and armed groups in the North of Mali, thanks to efforts by the African Union, through its Presidency, and the UN. We reaffirm our strong commitment to a political solution and to an inclusive dialogue process that must start without delay, as prescribed by the Ouagadougou agreement and UNSC decisions. We fully support the United Nation's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali efforts in stabilising the country and, with the commitment of neighbouring countries, including Algeria, Mauritania and the Economic Community of West African States, in working for a durable settlement respectful of the unity, territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Mali.

34. We commend the role played on the ground in the Central African Republic by the AU-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic, together with the forces sent by France and the European Union, to support the transition and encourage the Transitional Authorities to take urgent concrete steps toward holding free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections. We fully support the UN efforts in the areas of security, reconciliation, preparation of the elections, and humanitarian assistance.

Iran

35. We reaffirm our strong commitment to a diplomatic resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue and welcome the efforts by the E3+3, led by High Representative Ashton, and Iran to negotiate a comprehensive solution that provides confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. We underline the importance of the continuing effective implementation by the E3+3 and Iran of the Joint Plan of Action. We call on Iran to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency on verification of Iran's nuclear activities and to resolve all outstanding issues, including, critically, those relating to possible military dimensions. We strongly urge Iran to fully respect its human rights obligations. We call on Iran to play a more constructive role in supporting regional security, in particular in Syria, and to reject all acts of terrorism and terrorist groups.

North Korea

36. We strongly condemn North Korea's continued development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. We urge North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and to comply fully with its obligations under relevant UNSC resolutions and commitments under the September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. We call on the international community to implement fully UN sanctions. We reiterate our grave concerns over the ongoing systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations in North Korea documented in the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry, and urge North Korea to take immediate steps to address these violations, includ-

ing on the abductions issue, and cooperate fully with all relevant UN bodies. We continue to work to advance accountability for North Korea's serious human rights violations.

Middle East Peace Process

37. We fully support the United States' efforts to secure a negotiated two-state solution. We regret that greater progress has not been made by the parties and urge them to find the common ground and political strength needed to resume the process. A negotiated two-state solution remains the only way to resolve the conflict. We call on both sides to exercise maximum restraint and to avoid any unilateral action which may further undermine peace efforts and affect the viability of a two-state solution.

Afghanistan

38. We renew our long-term commitment to a democratic, sovereign, and unified Afghanistan and our enduring partnership with the Government of Afghanistan based on the principles of mutual respect and mutual accountability. The first round of presidential elections and the provincial council elections marked a historic achievement, especially for the more than 2.5 million women who voted, and we look forward to the completion of the electoral process. We continue to assist the Government of Afghanistan to strengthen their institutions of governance, reduce corruption, combat terrorism, support economic growth, and counter narcotics. We continue to actively support an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process of reconciliation.

Maritime Navigation and Aviation

39. We reaffirm the importance of maintaining a maritime order based upon the universally-agreed principles of international law. We remain committed to international cooperation to combat piracy and other maritime crime, consistent with international law and internationally recognised principles of jurisdiction in international waters. We are deeply concerned by tensions in the East and South China Sea. We oppose any unilateral attempt by any party to assert its territorial or maritime claims through the use of intimidation, coercion or force. We call on all parties to clarify and pursue their territorial and maritime claims in accordance with international law. We support the rights of claimants to seek peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including through legal dispute settlement mechanisms. We also support confidence-building measures. We underscore the importance of the freedom of navigation and overflight and also the effective management of civil air traffic based on international law and International Civil Aviation Organization standards and practices.

Other Issues

40. We reaffirm our commitment to the protection and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom, for all persons. We recognise the need to show unprecedented resolve to promote gender equality, to end all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, to end child, early and forced marriage and to promote full participation and empowerment of all women and girls. We look forward to the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict taking place in London later this month.

41. We reiterate our condemnation of terrorism and our commitment to cooperate in all relevant fora to prevent and respond to terrorism effectively, and in a comprehensive manner, while respecting human rights and the rule of law. We condemn the kidnapping of hundreds of schoolgirls by Boko Haram as an unconscionable crime and intend do everything possible to support the Nigerian government to return these young women to their homes and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

42. We confirm that non-proliferation/disarmament issues remain a top priority and

welcome the G–7 Non-proliferation Directors Group statement issued today.

Conclusion

43. We look forward to meeting under the Presidency of Germany in 2015.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton of the European Union. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of D-Day in Colleville-sur-Mer, France
June 6, 2014

President Hollande, the people of France, friends, family, our veterans: If prayer were made of sound, the skies over England that night would have deafened the world.

Captains paced their decks. Pilots tapped their gauges. Commanders pored over maps, fully aware that for all the months of meticulous planning, everything could go wrong: the winds, the tides, the element of surprise, and above all, the audacious bet that what waited on the other side of the Channel would compel men not to shrink away, but to charge ahead.

Fresh-faced GIs rubbed trinkets, kissed pictures of sweethearts, checked and rechecked their equipment. "God," asked one, "give me guts." And in the predawn hours, planes rumbled down runways, gliders and paratroopers slipped through the sky, giant screws began to turn on an armada that looked like more ships than sea. And more than 150,000 souls set off towards this tiny sliver of sand upon which hung more than the fate of a war, but rather the course of human history.

President Hollande, distinguished guests: I'm honored to return here today to pay tribute to the men and women of a generation who defied every danger, among them, our veterans of D-day. And, gentlemen, we are truly humbled by your presence here today.

Just last week, I received a letter from a French citizen. "Dear Mr. President and the American people," he wrote, "[we are] honored to welcome you . . . to thank you again for all the pain and efforts of [the] American people and others in our common struggle for freedom."

Today we say the same to the people of France. Thank you, especially for the generosity that you've shown the Americans who've come here over the generations—to these beaches and to this sacred place of rest for 9,387 Americans. At the end of the war, when our ships set off for America, filled with our fallen, tens of thousands of liberated Europeans turned out to say farewell, and they pledged to take care of the more than 60,000 Americans who would remain in cemeteries on this continent. In the words of one man, we will take care of the fallen "as if their tombs were our children's." And, the people of France, you have kept your word like the true friends you are. We are forever grateful.

Here, we don't just commemorate victory, as proud of that victory as we are. We don't just honor sacrifice, as grateful as the world is. We come to remember why America and our allies gave so much for the survival of liberty at this moment of maximum peril. We come to tell the story of the men and women who did it so that it remains seared into the memory of a future world.

We tell this story for the old soldiers who pull themselves a little straighter today to salute brothers who never made it home. We tell the story for the daughter who clutches a faded photo of her father, forever young; for the child who runs his fingers over colorful ribbons he knows signify something of great consequence, even if he doesn't yet fully understand why. We tell this story to bear what witness we can to what happened when the boys from America reached Omaha Beach.

By daybreak, blood soaked the water, bombs broke the sky. Thousands of paratroopers had dropped into the wrong landing sites; thousands of rounds bit into flesh and sand. Entire companies' worth of men fell in minutes. "Hell's Beach" had earned its name.

By 8:30 a.m., General Omar Bradley expected our troops to be a mile inland. "Six hours after the landings," he wrote, "we held only ten yards of beach." In this age of instant commentary, the invasion would have swiftly and roundly been declared, as it was by one officer, "a debacle."

But such a race to judgment would not have taken into account the courage of free men. "Success may not come with rushing speed," President Roosevelt would say that night, "but we shall return again and again." And paratroopers fought through the countryside to find one another. Rangers pulled themselves over those cliffs to silence Nazi guns. To the west, Americans took Utah Beach with relative ease. To the east, the British tore through the coast, fueled by the fury of 5 years of bombs over London and a solemn vow to "fight them on the beaches." The Canadians, whose shores had not been touched by war, drove far into France. And here at Omaha, troops who finally made it to the seawall used it as shelter, where a general barked, "If you're Rangers . . . lead the way!"

By the end of that longest day, this beach had been fought, lost, refought, and won, a piece of Europe once again liberated and free. Hitler's Wall was breached, letting loose Patton's army to pour into France. Within a week, the world's bloodiest beach had become the world's busiest port. Within a month, 1 million Allied troops thundered through Normandy into Europe, and as our armies marched across the continent, one pilot said it looked "as if the very crust of the Earth had shaken loose." The Arc de Triomphe lit up for the first time in years, and Paris was punctuated by shouts of "*Vive la France!*" and "*Vive les États-Unis!*"

Of course, even as we gather here at Normandy, we remember that freedom's victory was also made possible by so many others who wore America's uniform. Two years before he commanded armies, Eisenhower's troops sliced through North Africa. Three times before D-day, our GIs stormed the beaches at Sicily, Salerno, Anzio. Divisions like the Fighting 36th brawled their way through Italy, fighting through the mud for months, marching through towns past waving children before opening the gates to Rome. As the "dogfaces" marched to victory in Europe, the Devil Dogs—the Marines—clawed their way from island to island in the Pacific, in some of the war's fiercest fighting. And back home, an army of women—including my grandmother—rolled up their sleeves to help build a mighty arsenal of democracy.

But it was here, on these shores, that the tide was turned in that common struggle for freedom. What more powerful manifestation of America's commitment to human freedom than the sight of wave after wave after wave of young men boarding those boats to liberate people they had never met?

We say it now as if it couldn't be any other way. But in the annals of history, the world had never seen anything like it. And when the war was won, we claimed no spoils of victory. We helped Europe rebuild. We claimed no land other than the earth where we buried those who gave their lives under our flag and where we station those who still serve under it. But America's claim—our commitment—to liberty, our claim to equality, our claim to freedom and to the inherent dignity of every human being, that claim is written in the blood on these beaches, and it will endure for eternity.

Omaha, Normandy, this was democracy's beachhead. And our victory in that war decided not just a century, but shaped the security and well-being of all posterity. We worked to turn old adversaries into new allies. We built new prosperity. We stood once more with the people of this continent through a long twilight struggle until finally, a wall tumbled down and an Iron Curtain too. And from Western Europe to East, from South America to Southeast Asia, 70 years of democratic movement spread. And nations that once knew only the blinders of fear began to taste the blessings of freedom.

None of that would have happened without the men who were willing to lay down their lives for people they'd never met and ideals they couldn't live without. None of it would have happened without the troops President Roosevelt called "the life-blood of America . . . the hope of the world."

They left home barely more than boys and returned home heroes. But to their great credit, that is not how this generation carried itself. After the war, some put away their medals, were quiet about their service, moved on. Some, carrying shrapnel and scars, found that moving on was much harder. Many, like my grandfather, who served in Patton's army, lived a quiet life, trading one uniform and set of responsibilities for another, as a teacher or a salesman or a doctor or an engineer, a dad, a grandpa.

Our country made sure millions of them earned a college education, opening up opportunity on an unprecedented scale. And they married those sweethearts and bought new homes and raised families and built businesses, lifting up the greatest middle class the world has ever known. And through it all, they were inspired, I suspect, by memories of fallen brothers, memories that drove them to live their lives each day as best they possibly could.

Whenever the world makes you cynical, stop and think of these men. Whenever you lose hope, stop and think of these men. Think of Wilson Colwell, who was told he couldn't pilot a plane without a high school degree, so he decided to jump out of a plane instead. And he did, here on D-day, with the 101st Airborne, when he was just 16 years old.

Think of Harry Kulkowitz, the Jewish son of Russian immigrants, who fudged his age at enlistment so he could join his friends in the fight. And don't worry, Harry, the statute of limitations has expired. [*Laughter*] Harry came ashore at Utah Beach on D-day. And now that he's come back, we said he could have anything he wants for lunch today—he helped liberate this coast, after all. But he said a hamburger would do fine. [*Laughter*] What's more American than that?

Think of Rock Merritt, who saw a recruitment poster asking him if he was a man enough to be a paratrooper, so he signed up on the spot. And that decision landed him here on D-day with the 508th Regiment, a unit that would suffer heavy casualties. And 70 years later, it's said that all across Fort Bragg, they know Rock, not just for his exploits on D-day or his 35 years in the Army, but because 91-year-old Rock Merritt still spends his time speaking to the young men and women of today's Army and still bleeds "O.D. Green" for his 82d Airborne.

Whenever the world makes you cynical, whenever you doubt that courage and goodness is possible, stop and think of these men.

Wilson and Harry and Rock, they are here today, and although I know we already gave them a rousing round of applause, along with all our veterans of D-day, if you can stand, please stand; if not, please raise your hand. Let us recognize your service once more. These men waged war so that we might know peace. They sacrificed so that we might be free. They fought in hopes of a day when we'd no longer need to fight. We are grateful to them.

And, gentlemen, I want each of you to know that your legacy is in good hands. For in a time when it has never been more tempting to pursue narrow self-interest, to slough off common endeavor, this generation of Americans, a new generation—our men and women of war—have chosen to do their part as well.

Rock, I want you to know that Staff Sergeant Melvin Cedillo-Martin, who's here today, is following in your footsteps. He just had to become an American first, because Melvin was born in Honduras, moved to the United States, joined the Army. After tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, he was reassigned to the 82d Airborne. And Sunday, he'll parachute into Normandy. "I became part of a family of real American heroes," he said. "The paratroopers of the 82d."

Wilson, you should know that Specialist Jannise Rodriguez joined the Army not even 2 years ago, was assigned to the 101st Airborne, and just last month earned the title of the 101st Airborne Division Air Assault Soldier of the

Year. And that's inspiring, but not surprising, when the women of today's military have taken on responsibilities, including combat, like never before.

I want each of you to know that their commitment to their fellow servicemembers and veterans endures. Sergeant First Class Brian Hawthorne's grandfather served under General Patton and General MacArthur. Brian himself served two tours in Iraq, earned the Bronze Star in Baghdad for saving the life of his best friend, and today, he and his wife use their experience to help other veterans and military families navigate theirs. And Brian is here in Normandy to participate in Sunday's jump, and here, just yesterday, he reenlisted in the Army Reserve.

And this generation—this 9/11 generation of servicemembers—they, too, felt something. They answered some call; they said "I will go." They, too, chose to serve a cause that's greater than self, many even after they knew they'd be sent into harm's way. And for more than a decade, they have endured tour after tour.

Sergeant First Class Cory Remsburg has served ten. And I've told Cory's incredible story before, most recently when he sat with my wife Michelle at the State of the Union Address. It was here, at Omaha Beach, on the 65th anniversary of D-day, where I first met Cory and his fellow Army Rangers, right after they made their own jump into Normandy. The next time I saw him, he was in the hospital, unable to speak or walk after an IED nearly killed him in Afghanistan. But over the past 5 years, Cory has grown stronger, learning to speak again and stand again and walk again. And earlier this year, he jumped out of a plane again. And the first words Cory said to me after his accident echoed those words first shouted all those years ago on this beach: "Rangers, lead the way."

So Cory has come back today, along with Melvin and Jannise and Brian and many of their fellow Active Duty servicemembers. We thank them for their service. They are a reminder that the tradition represented by these gentlemen continues.

We are on this Earth for only a moment in time. And fewer of us have parents and grandparents to tell us about what the veterans of D-day did here 70 years ago. As I was landing on Marine One, I told my staff, I don't think there's a time where I miss my grandfather more, where I'd be more happy to have him here, than this day. So we have to tell their stories for them. We have to do our best to uphold in our own lives the values that they were prepared to die for. We have to honor those who carry forward that legacy, recognizing that people cannot live in freedom unless free people are prepared to die for it.

And as today's wars come to an end, this generation of service men and women will step out of uniform, and they, too, will build families and lives of their own. They, too, will become leaders in their communities—in commerce, in industry, and perhaps politics—the leaders we need for the beachheads of our time. And, God willing, they, too, will grow old in the land they helped to keep free. And someday, future generations, whether 70 or 700 years hence, will gather at places like this to honor them and to say that these were generations of men and women who proved once again that the United States of America is and will remain the greatest force for freedom the world has ever known.

May God bless our veterans and all who served with them, including those who rest here in eternal peace. And may God bless all who serve today for the peace and security of the world. May God bless the people of France. And may God bless our United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial. In his remarks, he referred to Sgt. Shaun Chandler, USA, who was wounded in an explosion in Baghdad, Iraq, on September 26, 2007.

The President's Weekly Address
June 7, 2014

Hi, everybody. This is commencement season, a time for graduates and their families to celebrate one of the greatest achievements of a young person's life. But for many graduates, it also means feeling trapped by a whole lot of student loan debt. And we've got to do more to lift that burden.

See, in a 21st-century economy, the surest pathway into the middle class is some form of higher education. The unemployment rate for workers with a bachelor's degree is just 3.3 percent, about half what it is for high school graduates. A typical graduate of a 4-year college earns $15,000 more per year than someone with just a high school diploma.

But at a time when college has never been more important, it's also never been more expensive. That's why, since I took office, I've worked to make college more affordable. We reformed a student loan system that gave away billions of taxpayer dollars to big banks and invested that money where it makes a bigger bang: in helping more young people afford a higher education.

But over the past three decades, the average tuition at a public 4-year college has more than tripled. The average undergraduate student who borrows for college now graduates owing almost $30,000. And I've heard from too many young people who are frustrated that they've done everything they were supposed to do and now they're paying the price.

I've taken action on my own to offer millions of students the opportunity to cap their monthly student loan payments to 10 percent of their income. But Congress needs to do its part. The good news is that Senate Democrats are working on a bill that would help more young people save money. Just like you can refinance your mortgage at a lower interest rate, this bill would let you refinance your student loans. And we'd pay for it by closing loopholes that allow some millionaires to pay a lower tax rate than the middle class.

That's the choice that your representatives in Congress will make in the coming weeks: protect young people from crushing debt or protect tax breaks for millionaires. And while Congress decides what it's going to do, I will keep doing whatever I can without Congress to help responsible young people pay off their loans, including new action I will take this week.

This country has always made a commitment to put a good education within the reach of all who are willing to work for it. That's what made us an economic superpower. That's what makes us special. And as long as I hold this office, I'll keep fighting to give more young people the chance to earn their own piece of the American Dream.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:55 p.m. on May 30 in the 6th floor conference room at the Children's National Medical Center's Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation for broadcast on June 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 6, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 7.

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum on Helping Struggling Federal Student Loan Borrowers Manage Their Debt
June 9, 2014

Thank you. Everybody, have a seat. Welcome to the White House. [*Laughter*] And I want to thank Andy for the terrific introduction. And this is commencement season, and it's always a hopeful and exciting time, and I'll bet we might have some folks who just graduated here today. Raise your hands. Let's see—yes, we've got a couple of folks who are feeling pretty good. [*Laughter*]

Of course, once the glow wears off, this can be a stressful time for millions of students. And they're asking themselves, how on Earth am I going to pay off all these student loans? And that's what we're here to talk about. And Andy, I think, gave a vivid example of what's going through the minds of so many young people who have the drive and the energy and have succeeded in everything that they do, but because of family circumstances, have found themselves in a situation where they've got significant debt.

Now, we know—all of you know—that in a 21st-century economy, a higher education is the single best investment that you can make in yourselves and your future, and we've got to make sure that investment pays off.

And here's why. For 51 months in a row, our businesses have now created new jobs, 9.4 million new jobs in total. And over the last year, we've averaged around 200,000 new jobs every month. That's the good news. But while those at the top are doing better than ever, average wages have barely budged. And there are too many Americans out there that are working harder and harder just to get by.

Everything I do is aimed towards reversing those trends that put a greater burden on the middle class and are diminishing the number of ladders to get into the middle class, because the central tenet of my Presidency, partly because of the story of my life and Michelle's life, is, this is a country where opportunity should be available for anybody: the idea that no matter who you are, what you look like, where you come from, how you were raised, who you love, if you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to live up to your responsibilities, you can make it here in America.

And in America, higher education opens the doors of opportunity for all. And it doesn't have to be a 4-year college education. We've got community colleges, we've got technical schools, but we know that some higher education—some additional skills—is going to be your surest path to the middle class. The typical American with a bachelor's degree or higher earns over $28,000 more per year than somebody with just a high school education—28 grand a year. And right now the unemployment rate for workers with a bachelor degree is about half of what it is for folks with just a high school education.

So you know that this is a smart investment. Your parents know this is a smart investment. That's why so many of them made such big sacrifices to make sure that you could get into college and nagged—[*laughter*]—you throughout your high school years. [*Laughter*]

Here's the problem: At a time when higher education's never been more important, it's also never been more expensive. Over the last three decades, the average tuition at a public university has more than tripled at the same time that the typical family's income has gone up just 16 percent.

Michelle and I both went to college because of loans and grants and the work that we did. But I'll be honest with you—now, I'm old, I've got to admit—[*laughter*]—but when I got out of school, it took me about a year to pay off my entire undergraduate education. That was it. And I went to a private school; I didn't even go to a public school. So as recently as the seventies, the eighties, when you made a commitment to college, you weren't anticipating that you'd have this massive debt on the back end.

Now, when I went to law school, it was a different story. But that made sense because the idea was, if you got a professional degree like a law degree, you would probably be able to pay it off. And so I didn't feel sorry for myself or any lawyers who took on law school debt. [*Laughter*]

But compare that experience just half a generation, a generation ago, to what kids are going through now. These rising costs have let the middle—have left middle class families feeling trapped. Let's be honest: Families at the top, they can easily save more than enough money to pay for school out of pocket. Families at the bottom face a lot of obstacles, but they can turn to Federal programs designed to help them handle costs. But you've got a lot of middle class families who can't build up enough savings, don't qualify for support, feel like nobody is looking out for them. And as Andy just described vividly, heaven forbid that the equity in their home gets used up for some

other family emergency or, as we saw in 2008, suddenly, home values sink, and then people feel like they're left in the lurch.

So I'm only here because this country gave me a chance through education. We are here today because we believe that in America, no hard-working young person should be priced out of a higher education.

This country has always made a commitment to put a good education within the reach of young people willing to work for it. I mentioned my generation, but think about my grandfather's generation. I just came back from Normandy, where we celebrated D-day. When that generation of young people came back from World War II, at least the men, my grandfather was able to go to college on the GI bill. And that helped build the greatest middle class the world has ever known.

Grants helped my mother raise two kids by herself while she got through school. And she didn't have $75,000 worth of debt, and she was raising two kids at the same time. Neither Michelle or I came from a lot of money, but with hard work and help from scholarships and student loans, we got to go to great schools. We did not have this kind of burden that we're seeing, at least at the undergraduate stages. As I said, because of law school, we only finished paying off our own student loans just 10 years ago. So we know what many of you are going through or look forward to—or don't look forward to. [*Laughter*] We—and we were doing it at the same time we already had to start saving for Malia and Sasha's education.

But this is why I feel so strongly about this. This is why I'm passionate about it. That's why we took on a student loan system that basically gave away tens of billions of taxpayer dollars to big banks. We said, let's cut out the middle man. Banks should be making a profit on what they do, but not off the backs of students. We reformed it; more money went directly to students. We expanded grants for low-income students through the Pell grant program. We created a new tuition tax credit for middle class families. We offered millions of young people the chance to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income; that's what Andy was referring to. Michelle right now is working with students to help them "Reach Higher" and overcome the obstacles that stand between them and graduation. This is something we are deeply invested in.

But as long as college costs keep soaring, we can't just keep throwing money at the problem. We're going to have to initiate reforms from the colleges themselves. States have to invest more in higher education. Historically, the reason we had such a great public education system—public higher education system—was, States understood we will benefit if we invest in higher education. And somewhere along the line, they started thinking, we've got to invest more in prisons than we do in higher education. And part of the reason that tuition has been jacked up year after year after year is State legislatures are not prioritizing this. They're passing the costs onto taxpayers. It's not sustainable.

So that's why I laid out a plan to shake up our higher education system and encourage colleges to finally bring down college costs. And I proposed new rules to make sure for-profit colleges keep their promises and train students with the skills for today's jobs without saddling them with debt. Too many of these for-profit colleges—some do a fine job, but many of them recruit kids in, the kids don't graduate, but they're left with the debt. And if they do graduate, too often, they don't have the marketable skills they need to get the job that allows them to service the debt.

None of these fights have been easy. All of them have been worth it. You've got some outstanding Members of Congress right here who have been fighting right alongside us to make sure that we are giving you a fair shake. And the good news is, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before. And that's something we should be proud of, and that's something we should celebrate.

But more of them are graduating with debt. Despite everything we're doing, we're still seeing too big a debt load on too many young people. A large majority of today's college seniors have taken out loans to pay for school. The average borrower at a 4-year college owes nearly

$30,000 by graduation day. Americans now owe more on student loans than they do on credit cards. And the outrage here is that they're just doing what they've been told they're supposed to do. I can't tell you how many letters I get from people who say, I did everything I was supposed to, and now I'm finding myself in a situation where I've got debts I can't pay off, and I want to pay them off, and I'm working really hard, but I just can't make ends meet.

If somebody plays by the rules, they shouldn't be punished for it. A young woman named Ashley, in Santa Fe, wrote me a letter a few months ago. And Ashley wanted me to know that she's young, she's ambitious, she's proud of the degree she earned. And she said, "I am the future"—she put "am" in capital letters so that I'd know she means business. [*Laughter*] And she told me that because of her student loan debt, she's worried she'll never be able to buy a car or a house. She wrote, "I'm not even 30, and I've given up on my future because I can't afford to have one." Now, I wrote her back and said it's a little early at—in your twenties to give up. [*Laughter*] So I'm sure Ashley was trying to make a point, but it's a point that all of us need to pay attention to. In America, no young person who works hard and plays by the rules should feel that way.

Now, I've made it clear that I want to work with Congress on this issue. Unfortunately, a generation of young people can't afford to wait for Congress to get going. The Members of Congress who are here are working very hard and putting forward legislation to try to make this stuff happen, but they have not gotten some of the support that they need. In this year of action, wherever I've seen ways I can act on my own to expand opportunity to more Americans, I have. And today I'm going to take three actions to help more young people pay off their student loan debt.

Number one, I'm directing our Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, to give more Americans who are already making their loan payments a chance to cap those payments at 10 percent of their income. We call it Pay As You Earn. We know it works, because we've already offered it to millions of young people. It's saving folks like Andy hundreds of dollars, potentially, every month. It's giving graduates the opportunity to pursue the dreams that inspired them to go to school in the first place, and that's good for everybody. And we want more young people to start their own businesses. We want more young people becoming teachers and nurses and social workers. We want young people to be in a position to pursue their dreams. And we want more young people who act responsibly to be able to manage their debt over time. So we're announcing steps that will open up Pay As You Earn to nearly 5 million more Americans. That's the first action we're taking today.

The second action is to renegotiate contracts with private companies like Sallie Mae that service our student loans. And we're going to make it clear that these companies are in the business of helping students, not just collecting payments, and they owe young people the customer service and support and financial flexibility that they deserve. That's number two.

Number three, we're doing more to help every borrower know all the options that are out there so that they can pick the one that's right for them. So we're going to work with the teachers' associations and the nurses' associations, with business groups, with the YMCA and nonprofits, and companies like TurboTax and H&R Block. And tomorrow I'm going to do a student loan Q&A with Tumblr to help spread the word. [*Laughter*] You're laughing because you think, what does he know about Tumblr? [*Laughter*] But you will recall that I have two teenage daughters, so that I am hip to all these things. [*Laughter*] Plus, I have all these 20-somethings who are working for me all the time. [*Laughter*]

But to give even more student borrowers the chance to save money requires action from Congress. I'm going to be signing this Executive order. It's going to make progress, but not enough. We need more. We've got to have Congress to make some progress. Now, the good news is, as I said, there are some folks in Congress who want to do it. There are folks here like Jim Clyburn, John Tierney, who are

helping lead this fight in the House. We've got Elizabeth Warren, who's leading this fight in the Senate. Elizabeth has written a bill that would let students refinance their loans at today's lower interest rates, just like their parents can refinance a mortgage. It pays for itself by closing loopholes that allow some millionaires to pay a lower tax rate than middle class families.

I don't know, by the way, why folks aren't more outraged about this. I'm going to take a pause out of my prepared text. You would think that if somebody like me has done really well in part because the country has invested in them, that they wouldn't mind at least paying the same rate as a teacher or a nurse. There's not a good economic argument for it, that they should pay a lower rate. It's just clout, that's all. So it's bad enough that that's already happening. It would be scandalous if we allowed those kinds of tax loopholes for the very, very fortunate to survive while students are having trouble just getting started in their lives.

So you've got a pretty straightforward bill here. And this week, Congress will vote on that bill. And I want Americans to pay attention to see where their lawmakers' priorities lie here: lower tax bills for millionaires or lower student loan bills for the middle class.

This should be a no-brainer. You've got a group of far-right Republicans in Congress who push this trickle-down economic plan, telling hard-working students and families, "You're on your own." Two years ago, Republicans in Congress nearly let student loan interest rates double for 7 million young people. Last year, they tried to strip protections from lower income students. This year, House Republicans voted overwhelmingly to slash Pell grants and make it harder for thousands of families to afford college. If you're a big oil company, they'll go to bat for you. If you're a student, good luck.

Some of these Republicans in Congress seem to believe that it's just because—that just because some of the young people behind me need some help, that they're not trying hard enough. They don't get it. Maybe they need to talk to Andy. These students worked hard to get where they are today.

Shanelle Roberson—where is Shanelle? Shanelle is the first in her family to graduate from a 4-year college. Shanelle is not asking for a handout; none of these folks are. They're working hard. They're working while they're going to school. They're doing exactly what we told them they should do. But they want a chance. If they do exactly what they're told they should do, that they're not suddenly loaded up where they've got so much debt that they can't buy a house, they can't think about starting a family, they can't imagine starting a business on their own.

Now, I've been in politics long enough to hear plenty of people, from both parties, pay lip service to the next generation, and then they abandon them when it counts. And we, the voters, let it happen. This is something that should be really straightforward, just like the minimum wage should be straightforward, just like equal pay for equal work should be straightforward. And one of the things I want all the voters out there to consider, particularly parents who are struggling trying to figure out how am I going to pay my kid's college education, take a look and see, who is it that's fighting for you and your kids, and who is it that's not? Because if there are no consequences, then this kind of irresponsible behavior continues on the part of Members of Congress.

So I ran for this office to help more young people go to college, graduate, and pay off their debt. And we've made some really good progress despite the best efforts of some in Congress to block that progress. Think about how much more we could do if they were not standing in the way.

This week, they have a chance to help millions of young people. I hope they do. You should let them know you are watching and paying attention to what they do. If they do not look out for you and then throw up a whole bunch of arguments that are meant to obfuscate—meaning confuse, rather than to clarify and illuminate—[*laughter*]—then you should call them to account. And in the meantime, I'm going to take these actions today on

behalf of all these young people here and every striving young American who shares my belief that this is a place where you can still make it if you try.

All right, thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

Why don't you guys come up. We'll sign—[*inaudible*].

[*At this point, the President signed the memorandum.*]

All right. There you go. That was quick.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:51 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Andrew I. MacCracken, executive director and cofounder, National Campus Leadership Council; and Shanelle A. Roberson, recent graduate, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Honoring the NCAA Men's and Women's Basketball Champion University of Connecticut Huskies
June 9, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. I've just got a few things to say here. Welcome to the White House, first of all.

Audience members. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

The President. You're pleased to be here, aren't you? [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Yes, we are.

The President. I think we should give it up for the men's and women's national college basketball champions, the Connecticut Huskies! Now, I have to say that, as President, one of my goals has been to eliminate waste and cut out duplicative programs to make things a little more efficient, but this might be carrying things a little too far. [*Laughter*]

We have, as you might expect, some big Huskies fans here today, including some outstanding Members of Congress. I also want to recognize your university president, Susan Herbst; your athletic director, Warde Manuel; and Larry McHugh, the chairman of your board of trustees. Give them a big round of applause. And of course, you've got a couple of great coaches in what I called when we were meeting back there the grizzled veteran, Geno Auriemma—[*laughter*]—and the new blood, Kevin Ollie, both in the house. I can make that joke now that I've got gray hair. [*Laughter*]

Only once before, in 2004, has one school won both the men's and women's Division I titles. And of course, that was who?

Audience members. UConn.

The President. It was UConn. [*Laughter*] This is the women's ninth national title, more than any other women's basketball team in history. For the men, it is their fourth title in the last 16 years, which is twice as many as anybody else during that same span of time. Which makes me think, what's up with you guys? Why aren't you sharing? [*Laughter*] It is just a remarkable thing what these two programs have accomplished.

Of course, this season the women went a perfect 40–0, won their games by an average of 34 points, so there was not a lot of suspense during their season. [*Laughter*] In a championship game billed as one of the biggest in women's basketball history, the Huskies routed the previously unbeaten Notre Dame—and gave me bragging rights. It gave me bragging rights to pick them in my bracket. This was not hard. [*Laughter*] I mean, me and 95 percent of the country. And this marked the fifth time that UConn has finished a season as an undefeated national champion.

Of course, a lot of this success belongs to Coach Geno, who has cemented his place as not only a legend in women's basketball, but one of the best coaches that we've ever seen at any level and any sport, period. So we are grateful to him. [*Applause*] Congratulations.

But I think Coach Auriemma would be the first to tell you that the credit goes to the players. And these were just some outstanding young ladies. You've got Breanna Stewart,

named the Final Four's Most Outstanding Player 2 years in a row. You've got Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, who overcame injury and illness during the season and came up big—as she is prone to do—during the tournament. You've got Stefanie Dolson and Bria Hartley, who went on to become top-10 picks in the WNBA draft.

And, Stefanie, I did not forget that you challenged me to a dance-off last year. It is going to happen. It is going to happen. [*Laughter*] Don't think that I—don't think that you're going to beat me on that. [*Laughter*] I also told you the—I also appreciate that you told the world about it after the title game. I have daughters in junior high and high school, and for their sake, I will not be dancing too much while the cameras are around. [*Laughter*]

Now, I also have to confess, I did not pick the men to win in my bracket. [*Laughter*] Of course, neither did anybody else, unless you went to UConn. [*Laughter*] Look at these guys, they're all raising their hand—[*laughter*]—yes, I went. Come on now, tell the truth. We were not counting on Shabazz Napier leading the way as the tournament's Most Outstanding Player and hitting big shot after big shot and locking down the perimeter defensively. The Huskies also had huge contributions from guys like Ryan Boatright, DeAndre Daniels, and Niels Giffey, who's not here because he's playing overseas.

After the tournament wins over Villanova, Iowa State, Michigan State, Florida, Kentucky, UConn became the first seven-seed ever to win the title. And afterwards, Coach Ollie said: "Somebody told me we were Cinderellas, and I said, 'No, we're UConn. That's what we do, bred to cut down nets.'" And that's Coach Ollie. He's always confident and calm and collected. In fact, a sportswriter once referred to him as "our future President." [*Laughter*] I don't know with a name like Kevin whether that's possible. [*Laughter*] But who knows, anything could happen.

Now, Coach Ollie is doing one other important thing. He's making sure his team hits the books as hard as they hit the boards. And this season, both the men and the women ranked among the Nation's best academically, and that's worth applauding.

Both teams have also done tremendous work in the community. They've raised awareness for cancer and autism. They've volunteered at senior centers, spent time with underprivileged youth. Coach Ollie and Coach Auriemma spoke at the Pentagon last month as part of our Hoops for Troops program. And last year, after the tragedy in Newtown, the men put on a clinic for kids at a local rec center, and they asked the media to keep it under wraps so the kids could just have a good time.

Finally, I want to take a moment to single out the women here, because I could not be more proud of the example that they present for my daughters. They're showing that just like the boys, girls can be tough, athletic, beautiful, successful, competitive, and make fun of me, which is what my daughters do all the time. [*Laughter*] So thank you guys for the outstanding example.

Congratulations to your championship Huskies. And this really isn't goodbye probably, because I suspect I'll see some of these folks again before I leave office. So let's strike the podium. We'll take some good pictures. Come on. And I know we've got some jersey presentations here. Where's my jersey? [*Laughter*] Come on!

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:24 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Breanna Stewart and Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, forwards, Stephanie Dolson, center, and Bria Hartley, guard, University of Connecticut women's basketball team; Shabazz Napier and Ryan Boatright, guards, DeAndre Daniels, forward, and Niels Giffey, guard/forward, University of Connecticut men's basketball team; and Andrew Sharp, staff editor, Grantland.

Remarks on Signing the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 and Legislation To Award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment

June 10, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Please, have a seat. Have a seat. Thank you.

Well, today I am proud to sign two bills into law.

Audience members. Yay!

The President. Love signing bills. One will support jobs strengthening our national infrastructure; the other honors military heroes from our history. Though they accomplish two very different things, these bills do what we want all our laws to do, and that's serve the American people by honoring our past and building a stronger future.

Now, the first bill I'll sign today is the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, also known as WRRDA, which will put Americans to work modernizing our water infrastructure and restoring some of our most vital ecosystems. During my State of the Union Address, I asked Congress to pass this bill by the summer, and I congratulate this outstanding crew for getting it done.

Bipartisan negotiators—[*applause*]. You had bipartisan negotiators—Senator Barbara Boxer, Senator Dave Vitter, Congressman Shuster, and Congressman Rahall—they set aside politics, they focused on what was important for the country and what was important for their communities, and as a consequence, we have a piece of legislation that's really going to make a good difference.

As more of the world's cargo is transported on these massive ships, we've got to make sure that we've got bridges high enough and ports that are big enough to hold them and accommodate them so that our businesses can keep selling goods made in America to the rest of the world. Meanwhile, many of America's businesses ship their goods across the country by river and by canal, so we've got to make sure that those waterways are in tiptop shape.

And this bill gives a green light to 34 water infrastructure projects across the country, including projects to deepen Boston Harbor and the Port of Savannah and to restore the Everglades. And with Congress's authorization, these projects can now move forward. So this bill will help towns and cities improve their commerce, but it's also going to help them prepare for the effects of climate change—storms, floods, droughts, rising sea levels—creating more adaptability, more resilience in these communities.

Traditionally, investments in our infrastructure have received strong bipartisan support. This hasn't always been true in the last few years. Right now we should be putting a lot more Americans back to work rebuilding our infrastructure. We've got 2 trillion dollars' worth of deferred maintenance that we could be getting done right now, especially because contractors are coming in under budget and on time. And there are a lot of guys with hard hats sitting at home.

So we could really be doing even more. The fact that this bill received some bipartisan support, I think, hopefully, sets a pattern for additional work that we can do on our transportation infrastructure. We need a transportation bill by the end of this summer in order to make sure that projects all across the country don't get shut down. So we're looking forward to seeing this same team work hard on that.

I just want to be clear: If Congress fails to act, then Federal funding for transportation projects runs out by the end of the summer. That means more than 100,000 active projects, nearly 700,000 jobs, would be at risk. Fortunately, we've got some leaders here who, I think, can work with us to make sure that doesn't happen.

And the good news—last point I want to make about infrastructure: World-class infrastructure is one of the reasons that America became a global superpower in the first place. And the good thing about infrastructure projects is, they can't be outsourced. American workers have to do the job right here in

America. So—and American companies—it has huge ripple effects. You need steel, you need concrete, you need engineers, you need architects. You've got folks who have Ph.D.'s and you've got folks who've got high school diplomas who can all benefit from the kinds of infrastructure projects that we've put together. So this should be really a high priority.

Now, for the second bill.

Shortly after Puerto Rico became part of the United States in 1898, a regiment of Puerto Rican soldiers was formed, and they served our Nation bravely ever since. In World War I, they defended the homeland and patrolled the Panama Canal Zone. In World War II, they fought in Europe. In Korea, they fought in mud and snow. They are the 65th Infantry Regime, U.S. Army. They are also known as the Borinquen—I've got to get this right—Borinqueneers.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. See? I practiced before I came out. They are from the Taino name for Puerto Rico. And segregation that set them apart from their fellow soldiers, but their courage made them legendary.

They earned thousands of medals for their service in Korea. Today we are going to add to those accolades by awarding these soldiers one of the country's highest civilian honors: the Congressional Gold Medal.

One of them, I'm sure, would be very proud to see his son James end up in the White House someday. James Albino has been serving in my administration since 2009, both here in the White House and at the Department of Homeland Security. I know this is a proud day for his family.

I want to thank Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, as well as Senator Richard Blumenthal, Senator Marco Rubio, Congressman Bill Posey. They led the efforts to pass this bill. And we are glad that we've got Puerto Rico's Governor, Alejandro Garcia Padilla, who is here with us today as well.

Only a handful of military units have ever received this award, and only one other Hispanic American has received this award, Roberto Clemente. That's pretty good company. So this is a proud day for the Borinqueneers and their families. It's a proud day for all of those whose lives they saved and whose freedom they defended. It's a proud day for all Americans, especially Hispanic Americans, who have made extraordinary contributions to our country, many through their military service.

So on behalf of the American people, we want to thank all the Borinqueneers and—for their extraordinary service. You've earned a hallowed place in our history.

And to those members of the 65th Infantry Regiment who are here with us today, I'd ask you to please stand and raise your hand so we can recognize you for your service.

All right. Okay. So I'm going to sign these bills. We're going to do the WRRDA first, these are the water folks. [*Laughter*] Then, we're going to get our infantry up here. All right?

Audience member. Hooah!

The President. There you go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Celestino Cordova, Rafael Gomez-Hernandez, Leonardo Martinez, Jose Pickard, Miguel Piñiero, Ramon Rodriguez, Federico Simmons, and Arcadio Santiago, retired soldiers from the 65th Infantry Regiment, USA; and James Albino, Executive Director, President's Task Force on Puerto Rico. H.R. 3080, approved June 10, was assigned Public Law No. 113–121; and H.R. 1726, approved June 10, was assigned Public Law No. 113–120.

Remarks at a Question-and-Answer Session on Student Loan Debt and College Affordability With Tumblr Participants

June 10, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody.

Audience members. Hi.

The President. Hey, you don't have to be so formal. [*Laughter*] Sheesh. Come on, now.

Tumblr, Inc., Chief Executive Officer David Karp. This is unusual. Thank you. Thank you, everyone, and welcome to the White House. Thank you for having us, Mr. President. I'm David Karp, the founder of Tumblr, and it is my tremendous privilege to be here with President Obama today and joined by the Tumblr community. Thank you for joining us, everyone.

Yesterday the President signed an Executive order intended to curb the pain of student debt. Americans now hold more than a trillion dollars in student debt, one of the greatest expenses they'll incur in their lifetime. And the generation that's just reaching college age is beginning to wonder if it's even worth it.

One-third of Americans who have applied for an education loan this year also happen to use Tumblr, so last week we asked our audience if they had questions that they'd like to ask the President about the cost value and accessibility of higher education. And turns out, they had quite a few. We're not going to be able to get through all of them today, but the President has been kind enough to give us some time at his house to answer some of those questions. [*Laughter*]

So again, huge thank you for making yourself available today. Anything you'd like to add before we start?

The President. Well, first of all, this is a rental house. [*Laughter*] And I just want to be clear: My lease runs out in about 2½ years.

Second of all, I want to thank David and the whole Tumblr community for participating in this. We're constantly looking for new ways to reach audiences that are relevant to the things we're talking about. And obviously, young people disproportionately use Tumblr. A lot of Tumblr users are impacted by student debt. So for you to be able to give us this forum to speak directly to folks is wonderful, and I'm looking forward to a whole bunch of good questions.

Mr. Karp. Thank you. Okay, so everybody is clear on how the questions worked, so since we closed for questions 5 p.m. yesterday, we brought together a team of influential Tumblr bloggers who helped us select some of the best questions. There are—a few of them, anyway, are joining us in the audience in the State Dining Room here today. Neither the White House nor the President have seen any of these questions in advance.

Should we get started?

The President. Let's go.

The President's Student Loan Debt/Tuition Costs

Mr. Karp. All right. So first came in from Caitlin: "I appreciate your willingness to work with legislators to attempt to retroactively diffuse the cost of some student's loans by creating new repayment plans, but this seems to me like an attempt to put a band aid on a broken leg. What are we doing to actually lower the cost of a college degree"—excuse me—"of college tuition so these loans will no longer be necessary?"

The President. Well, it's a great question. And let me give people some context for what's happened over the last 20, 30 years.

I graduated from college in '83, graduated from law school in 1990. And although I went to a private school, through a combination of grants, loans, and working, I had a fairly low level of debt that I was able to pay in 1 year without getting an incredibly well-paying job. I was able to keep my debt burden pretty low. Folks who were 10 years younger than me, they probably paid even less. And if you went to a State school at the time, typically people would come out with almost no debt whatsoever.

Today, the average debt burden, even for young people who are going to a public university, is about $30,000. And that gives you some

sense of how much the cost has escalated for the average young person.

Now, you mentioned earlier some people are wondering, is this a good investment? It absolutely is. The difference between a college grad and somebody with a high school diploma is about $28,000 a year in income. So it continues to be a very smart investment for you to go to college. But we have to find ways to do two things.

One is, we have to lower the costs on the front end. And then, if you do have to supplement whatever you can pay with borrowing, we've got to make sure that that is a manageable debt. And about 12 months ago, maybe 16 months ago, I convened college and university presidents around the country to start working with them on how we could lower debt—or lower tuition, rather.

The main reason that tuition has gone up so much is that State legislatures stopped subsidizing public universities as much as they used to, in part because they started spending money on things like prisons and other activities that I think are less productive. And so schools then made up for the declining State support by jacking up their tuition rates.

What's also happened is, is that the costs of things like health care that a university community with a lot of personnel has—have to shoulder, those costs have gone up faster than wages and incomes. The combination of those things has made college tuition skyrocket faster than health care costs have.

There are ways we can bring down those costs, and we know that because there are some colleges who have done a very good job in keeping tuition low. We also have to do a better job of informing students about how to keep their debt down, because frankly, universities don't always counsel young people well when they first come in. They say, don't worry about it, you can pay for it, not realizing that you're paying for it through borrowing that you're going to end up having to shoulder once you graduate.

Student Financial Counseling Efforts

Mr. Karp. What does—what does that help, what does that support look like? So Chelsea sent in a very similar question from Portland. So she asks: "Colleges help students get into debt. They don't often help offer financial planning services before school, after they graduate."

Do you guys have a plan to help students make sound financial decisions? I mean, these are teenagers who are making decisions sometimes amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars that are going to follow them through their entire lives. Hopefully, they have parents who can help them navigate those decisions. But if they don't, are they on their own?

The President. Well, we are already doing something we call Know What You Owe. And the idea is to work with every college, university, community college out there so that when you come into school, ideally even before you accept an admission from a school, you are given a sense of what your annual loans might be, what your financial package is going to translate into in terms of debt, assuming you go through a 4-year degree on schedule, and what your monthly payments are likely to be afterwards.

And so just that one step alone—making sure that schools are obliged to counsel you on the front end when you come in, as opposed to just on the exit interview once you've already accumulated the debt—that in and of itself can make a big difference.

Mr. Karp. Understood. We didn't get first names for everybody. So Haiku Moon asks—[*laughter*].

The President. That might be the first name. That's a cool name. [*Laughter*]

Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P–TECH) in New York City/Vocational Education/Income-Based Repayments

Mr. Karp. "It wasn't until after I graduated college that I realized what I wanted to do with my life. Now I have a degree that has very little to do with that goal and a mountain of debt. I can't help but wonder if I wasn't pressured to

go to college and was better prepared to make that decision—and if I was better prepared to make that decision, that I might be in a better place to pursue my dreams today. How can we change the public education system to better prepare and support young people making this huge decision?" I mean, again, teenagers deciding what they want to do for the rest of their lives.

The President. Well, one of the things that Haiku Moon—[*laughter*]—is alluding to is that high school should be a time in which young people have greater exposure to actual careers as opposed to just classroom study.

And I went to a wonderful school in New York called P–TECH, went there for a visit. What they've done is they have collapsed high school basically into a 3-year program. You can then extend for another 2 years and get an associate's degree. IBM is working with them so that if in fact they complete the curriculum that IBM helped to design, they know they've got a job at IBM on the back end. And that's just one example of what I'd like to see a lot more high schools do, which is give young people in high school more hands-on experience, more apprenticeships, more training.

If you are a graphic—somebody who is interested in graphic design, I'd rather have you work at a company doing graphic design your senior year or junior year to see if you actually like it, to get a sense of the training you need. You may not need a 4-year degree. You might only need a 2-year degree. You might be able to work while getting that degree. All that can save you money. So that can make a really big difference for high school kids.

At the same time, one of the things that we initiated several years back is something called income-based repayments. And that's something I really want to focus on, is—IBR for short—income-based repayments. What we did in 2011 was to say, all student loans going forward, if you have a debt and you decide you want to go into a job that—like teaching or social work—that doesn't necessarily pay a lot, you shouldn't be hampered from making that choice just because you've got such a significant debt load. So what we said was that we will cap your repayments of your loans at 10 percent of your income above $18,000. And by doing that, that gives people flexibility. It doesn't eliminate your debt. But what it does is it makes it manageable each month so that the career that you choose may not be constrained. And we then have additional programs so that if you go into one of the helping professions—public service, law enforcement, social work, teaching—then over time, that debt could actually be forgiven.

Now, the problem with it was that we passed this law in 2011; it only applied going forward. It didn't apply retroactively. So yesterday what I did was sign an executive action saying that the Department of Education is going to be developing rules so that, going backwards, anybody can avail themselves of this income-based repayments. Because I get a lot of letters from people who took out loans in 2005 or 2000; they are also in a situation where they're making regular payments, but it's very hard for them to make ends meet. And we want to ideally finish what's called the rulemaking process—nothing is easy around here—hopefully, by the time, say, the end of next year, the rules will be in place, that will be the law, and then everybody, and not just folks who borrowed after 2011, can take advantage of that.

But there's not a lot of knowledge of this, and I hope that the Tumblr community helps to spread the word that this is something already available for loans that you took out after 2011, and hopefully, by next year, it will be available for people even if you took out your loans before 2011.

Mr. Karp. Where do we find information about it?

The President. You should go to whitehouse.gov, the White House website. It will then link you to ED.gov, which is the Education Department website. But whitehouse.gov, I figure, is easier to remember. [*Laughter*]

Student Loan Repayment Options

Mr. Karp. Can you elaborate real quick on encouraging public service? So Josh from Oak Park sent in a really good question about this: "The U.S. has a long history of encouraging

college-age men and women to give back to their larger communities through organizations like the Peace Corps, through organizations like Teach for America."

The President. Right.

Mr. Karp. "Couldn't we make a larger commitment to that by creating tuition loan forgiveness programs for those students who agree to work in those fields or work in those geographic areas in need of skilled employees?" So you can imagine family practice doctors; you can imagine public defenders.

The President. I mean, right now we have some programs like this in place, but they're typically relatively small, relatively specialized. So there are some loan-forgiveness programs for primary care physicians who are going out to rural communities or inner cities or underserved communities. There are some programs that are available through the AmeriCorps program for people who are engaged in public service. They are not as broad based and widespread as I would like. And we have tried to work with Congress—so far, unsuccessfully—to be able to get an expansion of these areas.

And I'll—let's take health care as an example. We know that the population is aging. We know that we are—have a severe shortage of primary care physicians. A lot of young doctors are going into specialized fields like dermatology or plastic surgery because you can make a relatively large profit, you don't end up having a lot of liability, and that's not really what we need more of.

And so my hope is, is that over time, Congress recognizes that young people are our most precious asset. We—there are some areas that we know we need people to get into the field, our best and brightest, and right now the financial burdens are precluding them from doing it. And we could open up those fields to a huge influx of talent if we were a little smarter with it.

Mr. Karp. Okay. So you've touched on health care in public service and health care in general. You talk a lot about STEM fields. So how do we promote—this is one Orta asked: "How can we promote growth in STEM fields without putting humanities on the back burner?"

Humanities Education/Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education

The President. Well, first of all, I want to say, I was a humanities major. [*Laughter*] So I majored in political science, and I majored in—and I minored in English. And I was pretty good in math, but in high school—I actually loved math and science until I got into high school, and then I misspent those years. [*Laughter*] And the thing about the humanities was, you could kind of talk your way through classes, which you couldn't do in math and science, right? [*Laughter*]

So a great liberal arts humanities education is still critically important, because in today's global economy, one of the most important skills you have is your ability to work with people and communicate clearly and effectively. Having said that, what is also true is that technology is going to continue to drive innovation. And just to be a good citizen, you need some background in STEM, and we are not producing enough engineers, enough computer scientists, enough math teachers and science teachers, and enough researchers.

And so I'm putting a big emphasis on STEM in part because we have a shortage, not because I'm privileging one over the other, but because we don't have as many people going into the STEM fields. And it starts early.

Part of the—what we're trying to do is work with public schools to take away some of the intimidation factor in math and science. Part of what we're trying to do is make sure that we are reaching to demographics that are very underrepresentive, and yes, I mean you, women. Girls are still more likely to be discouraged from pursuing math, science, technology degrees. You see that imbalance in Silicon Valley, you see it in a lot of high-tech firms.

And so we're trying to lift up curriculums that are interesting for kids, work with schools in terms of best practices. One of the things that we're also discovering is that young people who have an interest in math and science, when they go to college, oftentimes, they're steered into finance because that's been perceived as the more lucrative option. And we're

trying to work with universities and departments of engineering, for example, to help mentor young people to understand that, if you look at the top 100 companies in the country, you've got a lot more engineers running companies than you do folks who have a finance background.

And so there are great opportunities. And one of the things that every young person should be thinking about is, A, what's their passion, what do they care about, but they should also be taking a look at where is there a demand. And frankly, if you've got a science or engineering background, the likelihood of you being unemployed is very low, because there's always going to be a need. And it doesn't preclude you from writing a haiku at some point and figuring out some creative outlet. But having that discipline and that skillset is still going to be invaluable.

The President's Career Advice for Young People

Mr. Karp. Well, what you just described is really hard to navigate, the—again, a teenager making the decision between passion or an industry that's going to have demand for them. So great question: "At this point, I'm stuck between majors. I know the field I have a passion for has a limited number of jobs, all of which pay very little. Assuming I get the job, the low income will make it difficult to pay the substantial debt I'll most likely be in from that education. Are there other fields"—excuse me—"there are other fields I know I could succeed in and receive the higher salary, but I'm afraid that one day I'll realize I hate what I do."

The President. Right.

Mr. Karp. Question was, how did you decide on your career, and what advice do you have for somebody who is coming up trying to navigate that marketplace with demand or their passions?

The President. Well——

Mr. Karp. By the way, one vote for keeping kids out of finance, please. Yes. [*Laughter*]

The President. Or the law, by the way, because—[*laughter*]—we have enough lawyers. Although it's a fine profession. [*Laughter*] And I can say that because I'm a lawyer.

I think everybody is different. But I do think that, first of all, when I first got out of school, I worked for a year in a job that I wasn't interested in because I wanted to pay off my loans.

Now, I had the luxury, as I said, that my loan burden was only—was small enough that I could pay it off in a year. But work is not always fun, and you can't always follow your bliss right away. And so I think that young people should be practical. I know a lot of young people who work for 5 years in some—in a field that they may not be interested, but it gives them the financial stability and the base from which then to do what they want. And there's nothing wrong with that.

I do—the main advice I would give young people starting off, though, is ultimately, you are going to do best at something you care deeply about. And some people have probably heard this said before, but if you really enjoy what you do, then it's—then the line between work and play starts vanishing a little bit. You still have to grind it out, but you can get into that mindset where the creativity or the effort and the sweat that you're putting into what you do doesn't feel like a burden, it feels like an expression of what you care about.

And so I think your career is not going to be a straight line all the time. I think there may be times where you got to take a detour and you got to do something practical to pay the bills. There are going to be times where you see an opportunity, and you're making a calculated risk that I'm going to start some wacky company called Tumblr. [*Laughter*]

And how you balance the practical with your highest aspirations is something that will be different for each person. Everybody is going to have different circumstances.

Value of College Education

Mr. Karp. What do you say to kids right now who ask you—they see their passion; they want to build big stuff for the Internet. They want to build the next big app or the next big social network. What do you tell them when they say, hey, look, David, Zuckerberg, Jobs, Gates, all these guys——

The President. Just dropped out of school.

Mr. Karp. ——might not necessarily deserve to get a company up, but dropped out of school?

The President. Yes. I mean, you wouldn't know it looking at you, but you're like LeBron or Durant. [*Laughter*] I mean, you guys don't have the same physiques—[*laughter*]—but there are only going to be so many Zuckerbergs or Gateses who are able to short-circuit the traditional path.

If you can, more power to you. But let me put it this way: Had you not—let's say Tumblr had been a bust, right? Or Facebook had just ended up being some dating site that nobody was really interested in. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Karp. We'd be in a hard place.

The President. Well, but the truth is also you had the foundation where you could go back to school, right? I mean, it wasn't as if you were suddenly operating without a net. I'm assuming that you would have been readmitted to whatever institution you were in. And if not, then you would go to another school, and you'd do fine.

So the issue is not whether you may not want to take a risk at some point. The point is that for the average young person, an investment in college is always going to be a smart investment. Making sure you know what it is that you're investing in is important.

One of the biggest areas where we see a problem is young people who are going, let's say, to technical schools or community colleges or some of these for-profit universities, they're promised a lot. But they haven't done the research to see, okay, does typically a graduate coming out of one of these schools get a job in the occupation? Are they actually making money? If you're going to have $50,000 worth of debt, you better have factored in what are the employment prospects coming out.

And so I think it's good for young people—not only good—it's imperative for young people to be good consumers of education, and don't just assume that there's one way of doing things.

We tell our daughters—Malia is now—she'll be 16 next month, and she's going to be in the college process. And we tell her, don't assume that there are 10 schools that you have to go to, and if you didn't go to those 10, that somehow things are going to be terrible. There are a lot of schools out there. There are a lot of options. And you should do your research before you decide to exercise one of those options. Having said that, the overwhelming evidence is that a college education is the surest, clearest path into the middle class for most Americans.

Department of Education's College Scorecard

Mr. Karp. Is the White House right now offering any of those tools to be a good a consumer, to navigate all the choices out there?

The President. Yes, yes. So if you go—again, go to whitehouse.gov, which will link you to the Department of Education, one of the things that we're doing is to—we're starting to develop a scorecard for colleges and universities so you have just a general sense of what's the typical graduation rate, what's the typical debt that you carry once you get out, what is the employment rate for graduates 5 years afterwards. And over time, one of the things that we're trying to do is develop a ranking system that is not exactly the same as the typical college-ranking systems that you see in U.S. News & World Report, for example.

Part of the problem with the traditional ranking systems of schools is that, for example, high cost is actually a bonus in the ranking system. It indicates prestige, and so there may be some great schools that are expensive, but what you're missing is a great school that may give you much better value, particularly in the field that you're in.

Now, there's some controversy, I want to confess, about—that a lot of colleges and universities say, you know, if you start ranking just based on cost and employability, et cetera, you're missing the essence of higher education and so forth. What we're really trying to do is just identify here are some good bargains, here are some really bad deals. Then there's going to be a bunch of schools in the middle that there's not going to be a huge amount of differentiation. But what we are trying to do is make sure that students have some—enough information going into it that they don't end up in a

school that is pretty notorious for piling a lot of debt on their students, but not really delivering a great education.

Private Student Loan Debt/Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act

Mr. Karp. Back to the debt, which is top of mind for everybody here today. So Megan from Tulsa asked an interesting question: "Of my $220,000 in student loans"——

The President. Yikes.

Mr. Karp. ——"from college and law school"—there you go—"less than half is receiving the benefit of loan forgiveness." Why is there no discussion on the mounting private student loan debt?

The President. Well, there is a discussion. The problem is, we just end up having less leverage over that. I mean, the truth is, is that both legislatively and administratively, we have some impact on Federal loans. Private loans—if you take—if you go to a private company and you're taking out a loan, we have the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau that is trying to regulate this area and make sure that you have full information about what you're getting yourself into. It's another version of Know Before You Owe. But it's harder for us to restructure some of that debt.

Now, one thing that I think is really important for everybody to know here—because this is actual action you can take, as opposed to just listening to me blather on—this week, there will be a vote in the United States Senate on a bill sponsored by Elizabeth Warren, the Senator from Massachusetts. And what this bill would do would allow students to refinance their existing loans at today's rates. The reason that's important is because rates have been low, and typically, there's going to be a pretty big spread between the rates that a lot of students—the interest rates that a lot of students have on their debt right now, versus what they could do if they refinanced, the same way that a lot of people refinance their mortgages to take advantage of historically low rates.

And so this vote is coming up. It will come up this week. I think everybody on Tumblr should be contacting their Senators and finding out where they stand on the issue, because—and by the way, this is something that will not add to the deficit, because the way we pay for it is, we say that we're going to eliminate some loopholes right now that allow millionaires and billionaires to pay lower rates of taxes than secretaries and teachers. And so it would pay for itself. It's a good piece of legislation. It directly affects folks in their twenties and thirties, and in some cases, their forties and fifties and sixties. But particularly the young people who use Tumblr, this is something that you should pay a lot of attention to. Make sure that you are pushing your Senators around this issue.

Student Engagement in Education/Vocational Education

Mr. Karp. Particularly important if you know you're facing that debt already——

The President. Right.

Mr. Karp. ——or you are already today facing that debt. What's the best way, though, for people who are—again, they're thinking about higher education, they're in school today—Emma askeed a thoughtful question: "What is the best way for students to have a voice in their own education?" So much education today, I think, really—I don't know, I mean, so many teenagers who feel like education is happening to them. They're going through the motions. They know that this is what they're supposed to do, and so they follow along. How do we make sure kids are driving?

The President. Well, look, at some point it's going to be up to the young person to drive that education. It's not inevitable that you just fasten your seatbelt and just go on a ride for 4 years or 2 years or whatever it is. I mean, I have to say that in my own college experience, I think the first 2 years I was there thinking, I'm just happy to be here and I'm having fun and I'll just sort of go through the motions. My last 2 years was when I really became much more serious about what I was doing and much more intentional about what I was doing.

That—too many young people see—and I'm grossly generalizing now, so excuse me—but I use myself as an example as well. I think too

many of us see college as a box to check or a place to have fun and extend adolescence—[*laughter*]—as opposed to a opportunity for each of us to figure out what is it that we're good at, what is it that we care about, what is it that we're willing to invest a lot of time and effort and energy into, how do we hone some skills or interests or attributes that we already have. And as a consequence, I think young people waste a lot of time in school.

Now, again, I'm generalizing, because there are a whole bunch of folks who are working while going to school, while helping out their parents. In some cases, they're already parents themselves. And so everything I just said does not apply to you. You are and a lot—it's interesting, one of the reasons I think I did well in law school was because I had worked for 3½ years, so that by the time I got to law school, I actually knew why I was studying the law, and I knew exactly what I wanted to get out of it, not to mention the fact that the idea of just going to class for 3 hours a day and then reading didn't seem particularly oppressive to me, whereas young people who had come straight out of college thought, this is horrible. You are—try working for a while, and then you realize that this is a pretty good deal. [*Laughter*]

So—but I think that part of what we as adults have to do goes back to what I said about high schools. Education is not a passive thing. You don't tip your head and somebody pours it into your ear. It is an active process of you figuring out the world and your place in it. And the earlier we can help young people—not lock them in. Look, nobody expects that somebody who is 16 automatically knows exactly what they want to do, and their—people may change their minds repeatedly. But what we can do is expose young people to enough actual work and occupations that they start getting a feel for what they would be interested in. And I really want to work with more school districts, and I've asked Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to work with more school districts, and we're actually giving grants to school districts that are thinking creatively about how high school can be used more effectively.

I don't want a young person who knows that they want to go into the trades to just waste 4 years of high school, and then they've got to go through 2 years of apprenticeship and classwork before they become a contractor. I'd rather have them doing contracting while also getting some other educational exposure so that they're getting a jump on the things that they want to do. And they can save a lot of money in the process.

Vocational Education

Mr. Karp. So Beth asked a question close to that—instead of—close to that point: "Instead of pushing all students into college, shouldn't we focus on the other side, increasing the minimum wage and making it viable, livable, to enter the workforce straight out of high school?" Should we be doing both?

The President. Absolutely. Well, here is what I would say: There are very few jobs now where you're not going to need some advanced training.

Mr. Karp. Okay.

The President. One of the great things about being President is, I get to visit companies and worksites and factories. And if you go into a—the average auto company today, for example, first of all, it's not at all what you'd imagine. It is spotless, and it is quiet, and it is humming, because it is all mechanized and computerized at this point. And even if you have a four-football-field-sized assembly line, most of the people there are working with machines, and they're working on computer keyboards.

So having some basic training in math, some familiarity with computers, some familiarity with programming and code, all that is a huge advantage if you are trying to get a job on an assembly line. Now, if that's true for assembly line work, that's certainly going to be true for any other trade that you're interested in.

We do have to do a better job of giving young people who are interested an effective vocational education. And there are tons of opportunities out there for people—here's an interesting statistic: The average trade person in Wisconsin—and what I mean by that is an electrician, a plumber, a carpenter, a machine

tool worker—the average age in Wisconsin is 59 years old, right? Now, these jobs typically pay 25, 30 bucks an hour, potentially, with benefits. You can make a really good living doing that, and there are a lot of folks who love doing it. It's really interesting work and highly skilled work.

So I don't want somebody to find out about that when they're 30, after they've already——

Mr. Karp. Okay. Got the debt——

The President. ——taken a bunch of classes and stuff that they ended up not using; now they've got a bunch of debt. I'd rather, if they've got that inclination, to figure that early and be able to go straight into something that helps them get that job.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972/Application of Title IX to Transgender Students

Mr. Karp. So one question we heard a lot from our community that I wanted to make sure to mention today: "Recently"—I think you've been following—"the Department of Ed's Office of Civil Rights and the DOJ have extended title IX protections to trans students. What do you see as the next steps to ensure equal treatment of trans people in schools in America?"

The President. Well, title IX is a powerful tool. It's interesting, yesterday I had the University of Connecticut men's and women's basketball teams here. This is only the second time that the men's and women's basketball teams won the national championship in the same year. The previous year was 2004, and it was UConn again.

But what was interesting about it is that the men were kind of a surprise. It was nice. The women were dominant. I mean, the UConn Husky women's program has—they rule. And they are incredible athletes. And talking to these young women, they're poised, and they're beautiful, and some of them are 6′6″, and they're wearing high heels and supremely confident and competitive. And that's a huge shift from even 20 years ago or 30 years ago. The reason for that was title IX was applied vigorously in schools, and it gave opportunities—it's not like women suddenly became athletes. They were athletic before. Michelle, when I work out with her, she puts me to shame. [*Laughter*] But it had more to do with restrictions and opportunity.

So the point I'm making is, is that title IX is a very powerful tool. The fact that we are applying it to transgender students means that they are going to be in a position to assert their rights if and when they see that they are being discriminated on their college campuses. And that could manifest itself in a whole variety of ways.

Gun Control

Mr. Karp. Brilliant. This one was sent in a few days ago: "Mr. President, my name is Nick Dineen, and I attend the school"—excuse me—"I attend school at the University of California, Santa Barbara. I was the RA for the floor that George Chen lived in"—excuse me—"lived on last year as a first-year college student. I knew him. Elliot Rodger killed him and five more of my fellow students. Today another man has shot and killed at least one person and injured three others at a private Christian school in Seattle. What are you going to do? What can we all do?" And of course, another mass shooting this morning.

The President. I have to say that people often ask me how has it been being President, and what are my—what am I proudest of and what are my biggest disappointments. And I've got 2½ years left. My biggest frustration so far is the fact that this society has not been willing to take some basic steps to keep guns out of the hands of people who can do just unbelievable damage.

We're the only society—we're the only developed country on Earth where this happens. And it happens now once a week. And it's a 1-day story. There's no place else like this. A couple of decades ago, Australia had a mass shooting similar to Columbine or Newtown. And Australia just said, "Well, that's it, we're not doing—we're not seeing that again," and basically, imposed very severe, tough gun laws. And they've never—they haven't had a mass shooting since.

Our levels of gun violence are off the charts. There's no advanced, developed country on Earth that would put up with this. Now, we have a different tradition. We have a Second Amendment. We have historically respected gun rights. I respect gun rights. But the idea that, for example, we couldn't even get a background check bill in to make sure that if you're going to buy a weapon, you have to actually go through a fairly rigorous process so that we know who you are, so that you can't just walk up to a store and buy a semiautomatic weapon—it makes no sense.

And I don't know if anybody saw the brief press conference from the father of the young man who had been killed at Santa Barbara. And as a father myself, I just could not understand the pain he must be going through and just the primal scream that he gave out: Why aren't we doing something about this?

And I will tell you, I have been in Washington for a while now, and most things don't surprise me. The fact that 20 6-year-olds were gunned down in the most violent fashion possible and this town couldn't do anything about it was stunning to me. And so the question then becomes, what can we do about it? The only thing that is going to change is public opinion. If public opinion does not demand change in Congress, it will not change. We have—I've initiated over 20 executive actions to try to tighten up some of the rules and the laws, but the bottom line is, is that we don't have enough tools right now to really make as big of a dent as we need to.

And most Members of Congress—and I have to say, to some degree, this is bipartisan—are terrified of the NRA. The combination of the NRA and gun manufacturers are very well financed and have the capacity to move votes in local elections and congressional elections. And so if you're running for office right now, that's where you feel the heat. And people on the other side may be generally favorable towards things like background checks and other commonsense rules, but they're not as motivated. So that's not—that doesn't end up being the issue that a lot of you vote on.

And until that changes, until there is a fundamental shift in public opinion in which people say, enough, this is not acceptable, this is not normal, this isn't sort of the price we should be paying for our freedom; that we can have respect for the Second Amendment, and responsible gun owners and sportsmen and hunters can have the ability to possess weapons, but that we are going to put some commonsense rules in place that make a dent, at least, in what's happening; and until that is not just the majority of you—because that's already the majority of you, even the majority of gun owners believe that—but until that's a view that people feel passionately about and are willing to go after folks who don't vote—in reflecting those values, until that happens, sadly, not that much is going to change.

The last thing I'll say: A lot of people will say that, well, this is a mental health problem, it's not a gun problem. The United States does not have a monopoly on crazy people. [*Laughter*] It's not the only country that has psychosis. And yet we kill each other in these mass shootings at rates that are exponentially higher than anyplace else. Well, what's the difference? The difference is, is that these guys can stack up a bunch of ammunition in their houses, and that's sort of par for the course.

So the country has to do some soul searching about this. This is becoming the norm, and we take it for granted in ways that, as a parent, are terrifying to me. And I am prepared to work with anybody, including responsible sportsmen and gun owners, to craft some solutions. But right now it's not even possible to get even the mildest restrictions through Congress, and that's—and we should be ashamed of that.

The President's Post-Presidency Plans

Mr. Karp. Thank you for taking the time to answer that one. Obviously, an incredibly difficult and disappointing conversation to have.

It looks like we have time for one more question, so let's switch over to a lighter one. There are plenty of young people out there today who are watching your career incredibly closely. They're thinking about their futures,

their careers, their educations that they're going off to pursue. Astonishment asked, "Where do you see yourself in 10 years?" [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, I haven't projected out 10 years. I'm really focused on making sure that I make every day in the next 2½ years count, because it's an incredible privilege to be in this office. And even when I'm frustrated with Congress or I'm frustrated with the press and how it's reporting things and Washington generally, I also know that there's something I can do every single day that's helping somebody and that, sometimes without a lot of fanfare, we're making it easier for a business to get a loan and we're making it easier for a young person to get an education and we're making it easier for a family to get health care. And making sure that each day I come away with something that we've done to make it a little easier for folks to work their way into the middle class, to stay in the middle class, to save for retirement, to finance their kids' college educations—that's a good day for me.

I know what I'll do, like, right after the next President is inaugurated. I'll be on a beach somewhere drinking a—out of a coconut. [*Laughter*] But that probably won't last too long.

And one of the things that Michelle and I have talked about a lot is, we're really interested in developing young people and working with them and creating more institutions to promote young leadership. I'm so impressed when I meet young people around the country. They're full of passion. They're full of ideas. I think they're much wiser and smarter than I was, part of it maybe is because of Tumblr, I don't know. [*Laughter*]

And so there's just huge potential. And the challenge is, they're also fed a lot of cynicism. You guys are fed a lot of cynicism every single day about how nothing works and big institutions stink and government is broken. And so you channel a lot of your passion and energy into various private endeavors.

But this country has always been built both through an individual initiative, but also a sense of some common purpose. And if there's one message I want to deliver to young people like a Tumblr audience is, don't get cynical. Guard against cynicism. I mean, the truth of the matter is, is that for all the challenges we face, all the problems that we have, if you had to be—if you had to choose any moment to be born in human history, not knowing what your position was going to be, who you were going to be, you'd choose this time. The world is less violent than it has ever been. It is healthier than it has ever been. It is more tolerant than it has ever been. It is better fed than it's ever been. It is more educated than it's ever been.

Terrible things happen around the world every single day, but the trend lines of progress are unmistakable. And the reason is, is because each successive generation tries to learn from previous mistakes and pushes the course of history in a better direction. And the only thing that stops that is if people start thinking that they don't make a difference and they can't make changes. And that's fed in our culture all the time.

It's fascinating to me—I don't consume a lot of television, but generally, the culture right now is inherently in a cynical mood in part because we went through a big trauma back in 2007, 2008 with the financial crisis, and we went through a decade of wars that were really tough. And that's the era in which you were born.

But look out on the horizon, and there's a lot of opportunity out there. And that's what I'd like to do after the Presidency, is make sure that I help young people guard against cynicism and do the remarkable things they can do. Good.

Mr. Karp. Beautiful. Mr. President, thank you so much for taking time to answer our questions today, really.

The President. We had a great time. Appreciate it. Enjoyed it.

Mr. Karp. Really. Thank you.

The President. Appreciate it. It was great. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. Karp. Was that okay? I've never talked to a President before.

The President. He's a natural. You could have gone into journalism.

Mr. Karp. I've never talked to a President before. Thank you so much. So, hey, real quick, guys, before we go, I would really like to thank the President for having us over to his rental property today. [*Laughter*] Yes. It really does mean a lot to our community to know that America's leader is listening to us. I hope we've all come away with a clear picture as to the issues that we're facing. Please make sure to follow whitehouse.tumblr.com. And lastly, please wish—excuse me—Sasha a happy 13th birthday from us.

The President. It is Sasha's birthday today.

Mr. Karp. Now that she's 13, guys, now that she's 13, according to our terms of service, she's officially old enough to use Tumblr. [*Laughter*] Let us know.

The President. So she wasn't before that? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Karp. She wasn't. I'm sorry. We can let this one slide. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm going to have to talk to somebody about that. [*Laughter*]

All right. Thank you, guys. Had a great time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:15 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to LeBron R. James, forward, National Basketball Association's Miami Heat; Kevin W. Durant, forward, NBA's Oklahoma City Thunder; Mark E. Zuckerberg, founder and chief executive officer, Facebook, Inc.; William H. Gates III, chairman, Microsoft Corp.; and Richard Martinez, father of Christopher Michaels-Martinez, who was killed in the May 23 shootings in Isla Vista, CA, near the campus of the University of California, Santa Barbara. He also referred to the memorandum of June 9 on helping struggling Federal student loan borrowers manage their debt. Mr. Karp referred to Elliot Oliver Robertson Rodger, accused gunman in the May 23 shootings in Isla Vista, CA; Aaron Rey Ybarra, suspected gunmen in the June 5 shootings near the campus of Seattle Pacific University in Seattle, WA; and Paul Lee, who was killed in the June 5 shootings.

Statement on the Presidential Election in Israel
June 10, 2014

The people of the United States join me in offering Reuven Rivlin congratulations on his election as the next President of the State of Israel.

Over more than six decades, the United States and Israel have developed a unique relationship based on shared democratic values, our unshakeable commitment to Israel's security, and our partnership in scientific research and innovative technology. President-elect Rivlin has a long and dedicated record of public service, and we look forward to continued strong ties, to the benefit of both our nations, under Mr. Rivlin's Presidency.

As President Shimon Peres nears the end of his term, he can look back on a remarkable legacy of courage, conviction, and compassion. He has dedicated his extraordinary life to the cause of peace, and I look forward to welcoming him in Washington later this month where he will receive the Congressional Gold Medal.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions and Policies of Certain Members of the Government of Belarus and Other Persons To Undermine Belarus's Democratic Processes or Institutions
June 10, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the

Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons to undermine Belarus's democratic processes or institutions that was declared in Executive Order 13405 of June 16, 2006, is to continue in effect beyond June 16, 2014.

The actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons to undermine Belarus's democratic processes or institutions, to commit human rights abuses related to political repression, and to engage in public corruption continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13405 with respect to Belarus.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
June 10, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Commencement Address at Worcester Technical High School in Worcester, Massachusetts
June 11, 2014

The President. Thank you! Please, everybody, be seated. Well, good afternoon. It is great to be back in Massachusetts, and it is great to be here at Worcester Tech!

I want to thank Reggie for that outstanding introduction. I want to thank Naomi for those inspiring words. I want to thank your outstanding, fabulous principal, Sheila Harrity, who has done so much to make this school a success. Let me just say, when you're the National High School Principal of the Year, you're doing something right. There are a lot of principals out there, and we could not be prouder of what she's doing.

I want to thank your mayor, Joseph Petty; your outstanding Governor and a great friend of mine, Deval Patrick; wonderful Congressman, Jim McGovern. And most of all, I want to thank the class of 2014. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your special day. And you all look great. And I want to thank all the parents and all the grandparents and the family and the friends. This is your day too. Part of the reason I'm here is because I've got to practice, because Malia is graduating in 2 years. So I'm trying to get used to not choking up and crying and embarrassing her. So this is sort of my trial runs here.

I have to say, I do not remember my high school graduation speaker. I have no idea who it was. [*Laughter*] I'm sure I was thinking about the party after graduation. I don't remember the party either. [*Laughter*] I'm just telling the truth here. You will remember the speaker at this graduation because there's a lot of Secret Service around, not because of anything that I say that's so inspiring.

But I know this day has been long time coming. Together, you made it through freshman initiation. You survived Mr. O'Connor's English class, which I understand is pretty tough. Everybody has got to have, like, a Mr. O'Connor in their life just to kind of straighten you out. And now it's the big day, although I notice that none of you are wearing your IDs. Rumor has it, some of you haven't been wearing them for years. [*Laughter*] Today I'm exercising my power as President and granting an official pardon for all of you who did not follow the rules there. I consider it my graduation gift to you.

I know a lot of folks watching at home today will see all of you in your caps and your gowns. And you'll think, well, maybe this is just

another class of graduates at another American high school. But I'm here today because there is nothing ordinary about Worcester Tech or the class of 2014. You have set yourselves apart. This high school has set itself apart.

Over the past 4 years, some of you have learned how to take apart an engine and put it back together again. Some of you have learned how to run a restaurant or build a house or fix a computer. And all of you are graduating today not just with a great education, but with the skills that will let you start your careers and skills that will make America stronger.

Together, you're an example of what's possible when we stop just talking about giving young people opportunity, when we don't just give lip service to helping you compete in the global economy, we actually start doing it. That's what's happening right here in Worcester. And that's why I'm here today. I mean, I like all of you, and I'm glad to be with you, but the thing I really want to do is make sure that what we've learned here at this high school we can lift up for the entire Nation. I want the Nation to learn from Worcester Tech.

Of course, your journey is just beginning. Take a look around at all the smiles from the parents and the grandparents and all the family members. Everything your families have done has been so that you could pursue your dreams, so that you could fulfill your potential. Everybody here has a story of some sacrifice that's been made on your behalf. And whether you're heading to college or the military or starting your career, you're not going to be able to take them with you now. Some of your moms and dads probably wish they could hang onto you a little bit longer. [*Laughter*] Some of you, maybe they're ready to get rid of you. [*Laughter*] Regardless, though, you are now entering into a stage where it's up to you. And what you can do is remember some of the lessons that you've learned here and carry them with you, wherever you're going.

And I want to talk about three of those lessons, a couple of which have already been mentioned by the previous speakers.

First of all, I want you to remember that each of us is only here because somebody somewhere invested in our success. Somebody invested in us. I know that's true for me. I was raised by a single mom with the help of my grandparents. We didn't have a lot of money growing up. At times, we struggled. When my mom was going to school at the same time as she was raising my sister and me, we had to scrape to get by.

But we had a family who loved me and my sister. And I had teachers who cared about me. And ultimately, with the help of a community and a country that supported me, I was able to get a good education. And I was able to get grants and student loans, and opportunities opened up. And all of this happened because people saw something in me that I didn't always see in myself. And that's not just true for me, that's true for Michelle, who grew up the daughter of a blue-collar worker and a mom who stayed at home and then became a secretary, never went to college themselves.

That's true for Deval, who grew up initially on the South Side of Chicago and didn't have a lot, and somebody reached out and gave him a hand up.

It's true of this city. This is a town that's always been home to smart people with big ideas. The mayor mentioned Robert Goddard, the father of the modern rocket. He was born here, performed some of the earliest tests on rocketry.

But Worcester has also prepared its workers for the jobs that those big ideas would bring. And that's why they opened a technical school here more than a century ago, with a class of 29 ironworkers and 23 woodworkers. And that school became Worcester Tech.

Along the way, the economy changed. Innovation made it possible for businesses to do more with less. The Internet meant those companies could do it anywhere. Schools like this were finding it harder to prepare students with the skills that businesses were looking for.

And then a guy named Ted Coghlin came along. And Ted is known as the godfather of Worcester Tech, because about 10 years ago, he set out to make this school what he knew it could be: a place where businesses train new

workers and young people get the keys to a brighter future.

And he put his heart and soul into it. And eventually, that's what happened. Ted helped raise money for a new building, and the State and Federal government chipped in as well. And businesses helped create everything from an auto service center to a bank right inside the school. And top-notch teachers got on board, led by Principal Harrity and the assistant principals here and an outstanding superintendent. And before long, Worcester Tech was on its way to becoming one of the best schools in this city.

And today, so many students want to come to Worcester Tech that there's a waiting list more than 400 names long. The number of students scoring "proficient" or "advanced" in math has gone up 100 percent; in English more than 200 percent. Ninety-five percent of students now graduate in 4 years.

And just as impressive, many of you are leaving here with more than a diploma. You're already certified as nursing assistants and EMTs and home health aides and preparing to become IT associates. And with the credits that you've earned, some of you are already on your way to a college diploma. And as Ted said, "Our students deserve the best so we can help them become the best, for their future and ours."

The point is, a lot of people made an investment in you. I can't imagine a better investment. But as you experience your success and as you experience setbacks, you need to remember everything that's been put into making sure that you had opportunity. Which brings me to the second thing I hope you remember when you leave here: You're going to also have to give back. This community invested in you. You've got to make sure that you use those gifts.

When my Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, came to Worcester Tech earlier this year, he said he had never seen a school more open. If you live near the school, you can come in and get your car detailed for a fraction of what it would cost somebody someplace else. So I'm giving a little free advertising to the detailing operation here. [*Laughter*] You can eat a meal cooked by students in the culinary arts program. One teacher called the hair salon the "city's best kept secret." Your veterinary clinic cares for about 250 pets a month, so I could have brought Bo and Sunny here. [*Laughter*] You guys would have taken care of them.

So Worcester Tech isn't separate from the broader community. You're a vital part of the community. So part of what you've learned here is that we are at our best, we are strongest when we are working together and when we're looking out for one another and we have responsibilities towards each other and all of us have contributions to make. You're giving back to folks who gave you so much. And whatever you do next, I hope you keep giving back. That may mean staying in Worcester and working for one of the companies that helped train you. If it means going to college or the military or using your skills to help more students get the same opportunities that you've had here, no matter what it is that you do, no matter what path you take, I want to make sure that you understand the incredible leadership that we now expect from you.

I understand that every year at exam time, you hear from a motivational speaker. And one of them this year was Colin Powell, because when you're getting ready to take a test, it never hurts to get a pep talk from a general. [*Laughter*] But the best part is that you decide to do the same thing for younger kids. So this class—those of you in the National Honor Society—rolled out the red carpet for students at nearby Chandler Elementary. And so those younger kids left here feeling fired up, inspired by your example, looking up to you, imagining that they could do what you did. And they're going to keep on looking up to you.

And there are going to be people across the country who are watching you. And when they see you succeed, when they see you working hard, when they see you overcoming setbacks, that's going to inspire them as well.

And that brings me to my final point, which is, I hope you leave here today believing that if you can make it, then there shouldn't be any kid out here who can't make it. Every child in

America, no matter what they look like or where they grow up, what their last name is, there's so much talent out there. And every single child—as Ted understood when he helped transform this school—every single child should have the opportunity like you have had to go as far as your talents and hard work will take you. I've seen you do it, so we know it's possible.

Now, it's a challenging time. I think sometimes, I worry that your generation has grown up in a cynical time: in the aftermath of a great recession, in the aftermath of two wars. We live in a culture that so often focuses on conflict and controversy and looks at the glass half empty instead of half full. And you're graduating at a time when you'll no longer be competing just with people across town for good jobs, you're going to be competing with the rest of the world.

But when I meet young people like you, I am absolutely certain, we are not just going to outcompete the rest of the world, we are going to win because of you. Because we are Americans, that's what we do. We don't settle. We outwork, we out innovate, we outhustle the competition. And when we do, nobody can beat us.

And that's what you've shown at this school, not just helping a few kids go as far as their hard work will take them. I want all of you to be part of the process of helping all our young people achieve their God-given potential. And as President, my job is to make sure every child in America gets that chance. And Deval Patrick's job is to make sure that everybody in the Commonwealth gets that chance. And the mayor, his focus is making sure everybody in this town gets that chance. Every community is different. But if Worcester can bring teachers and business and entire communities together for the sake of our young people, then other places can too.

And that's why I've challenged high schools all across the country to do what you're doing here: better prepare students for the demands of the global economy. We're getting started this year with a competition that pairs schools and employers and colleges to combine quality education with real-world skills.

As part of that initiative, I launched something called ConnectED, working with the private sector to connect America's students to high-speed broadband and advanced technology, just like you've got here at Worcester Tech. Already, companies have committed to donate $2 billion to this effort. And starting later this week, schools and teachers and students will be able to go to whitehouse.gov and access resources in time for the new school year, because I want to encourage more schools to do what you are doing. You've set a standard. You've set a bar. More schools can do it across the country.

If you're going to college, I also want to make sure that when you graduate you don't have a mountain of debt. So we're not only working to make college more affordable, we're working to help more students pay back their loans that they take out when they go to college. It is not fair to students who do everything right to get saddled with debt that they have to pay off not just for years, but in some cases, decades. We can do better than that.

And I—even though they had votes and they couldn't make it, I want to give a plug to a couple people: Senator Elizabeth Warren and Congressman John Tierney, both from Massachusetts, who introduced bills that would make it easier for students to repay their student loans.

It's the same idea we used to make it easier for your parents to pay off their mortgages. Now today that idea was defeated by Republicans in Congress, which was frustrating, especially——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Well, don't boo. Just remember to vote. [*Laughter*] But—so I know that it's frustrating for parents. It's frustrating for students who are working hard and doing everything right. There are too many politicians in Washington who don't have the right priorities. We need to straighten them out. And maybe they forgot where they came from and who invested in them along the way. And when a bill to help you pay off your college doesn't pass,

it's a disservice not only to your generation, but to our history as a nation that strives to put quality education within the reach of every American. So we're going to have to keep on putting pressure on Congress.

But in the meantime, where Congress won't act, I'm going to do whatever I can on my own. So on Monday, I announced executive actions that are going to help students like you find the right options and give millions of Americans who are already making their loan payments a chance to cap those repayments at 10 percent of their income. Because a quality education shouldn't be something that other kids get, it should be something that every kid gets. And that has to be a priority for this country.

I tell you all this not just because you stand to benefit from changes in laws, but because you're going to have to be a part of helping to shape the law. You're going to have to shape public opinion. You're going to have to remember everybody who invested in you. You're going to have to remember the experience of being part of this incredible community. And then, when you go out into the world, whether you are a businessperson or you are in the military or you are an academic or a doctor or whatever it is that you're doing, you're also going to be a citizen. You're also going to be somebody who has a voice in how this country operates. And you've got to push so that others get the same chance you did.

And making sure that every young person has the same opportunities you've had, it won't be easy. Progress takes commitment. It takes hard work. We have to fight through the cynicism. It's going to take work from parents and from teachers and members of the community and from students. But I know we can do it, and I know it because of you.

If Melinda Blanchard can get so good at welding that a bunch of college kids ask her help building a solar-paneled house for a competition in China, I know that we can get more young people excited about learning. If Greg Carlson can help the robotics team at Worcester Tech win the world championship and still find time to mentor a robotics team at the middle school where he started out, then I know we can help guarantee every child in America a quality education. If Derek Murphy can start his own web development company and graduate with 18 college credits, I know we can help more students earn the skills that businesses are looking for.

You're already doing it. You're already blazing a trail. You're already leading. You're already giving back. You don't need to remember what I said today, because you're already doing it.

And if it can happen in Worcester, it can happen anyplace. And if it does—if more communities invest in young people like you, if you give back, if we all keep fighting to put opportunity within the reach of everybody who is willing to work for it—America will be stronger, your future will be brighter. There is no limit to what we can do together.

So congratulations, class of 2014. You're going to do big things. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:44 p.m. in the DCU Center. In his remarks, he referred to Reginald O. Sarpong, senior class president, Naomi L. Desilets, valedictorian, Kevin O'Connor, English teacher, Edwin "Ted" Coghlin, Jr., chairman of the board of trustees, Mary O'Malley, Brian Potter, and Siobhan Petrella, assistant principals, and Melinda M. Blanchard, Gregory M. Carlson, and Derek T. Murphy, graduating seniors, Worcester Technical High School; Melinda J. Boone, superintendent, Worcester Public Schools; and former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng and mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Weston, Massachusetts

June 11, 2014

Thank you. Well, it is wonderful to see Paul and Joanne really have been there from the get-go. And I've had the pleasure of their friendship and support when people couldn't pronounce my name in a lot of places—[*laughter*]—and I so appreciate the risk they took with me. And it means so much to be in their home today.

You have one of the best Governors, I think, in the history of the Commonwealth in Deval Patrick. Deval is one of the first people that I consulted with when I decided to run for the U.S. Senate, because we had a mutual friend back in Chicago, and Deval was already a hotshot, famous guy—[*laughter*]—and I was kind of a nobody. And he was willing to take the time to talk to me and even support me in this harebrained idea that I had of running for the U.S. Senate.

And then, I got to the Senate, and he came to me with this harebrained idea of running for Governor, and I think I was one of the first people he talked to about that. And I could not be prouder not just of the kind of Governor he's proven to be, but more importantly, to be associated with the kind of man that he is. So really, really proud of him.

And we've got Mo Cowan, who was in the Senate a short time, and yet made such a favorable impression throughout the Senate and in Washington that Deval and I were talking just the feedback that we continue to get for the outstanding service he provided. So very much appreciate everything that Mo has done.

Elizabeth and Ed are representing you with excellence. They couldn't be here because they've got some votes. Michael Bennet couldn't be here because he's got some votes. But I've got to tell you, I really want to keep a Democratic Senate. And I want to tell you that I want to keep a Democratic Senate not because I think Democrats have a monopoly on wisdom. Sometimes, people ask me what would I like for Father's Day or Christmas or my birthday, and pretty close to the top of my list is usually a loyal and rational opposition. [*Laughter*] We want a Republican Party that can function and with which we can negotiate and compromise and help move the country forward. But unfortunately, that's not what we're seeing in Washington right now from the Republicans.

And Paul is right. I got into politics because of values that were implanted in me both intentionally by my mother and grandparents, values of honesty and hard work and responsibility and a faith in this country and a faith in the future, but also values that were instilled in me from experience: knowing what it's like to be in a household that doesn't have a lot of resources, and yet you're part of a community and a country that's willing to invest in you, that's willing to make sure that you can go to the best schools in the world; that experiencing the fact that an unusual name or an unusual background was not an impediment for me to follow my dreams.

And everything I've done to this point and everything I will do until my last day as President is built around those values and wanting to make sure that those values live for the next generation and the generation after that.

I can't think of a better example than the group of young people that I just met in Worcester—Worcester Tech. A remarkable school. A National Principal of the Year, a young woman who's just got everything going for her. And she oversees a school that has been selected as a Blue Ribbon school—one of the best in the State, one of the best in the country—that combines academic excellence with technical training. Kids are coming out 95-percent graduation rates; increased math scores by 100 percent, increased reading scores by 200 percent. And they're getting apprenticeships and hands-on training so that they run their own veterinary clinic in the school. They have an auto detailing shop in the school. They've got a hair salon in the school that I hear is pretty good. [*Laughter*]

So these young people are graduating, ready to go to college, but also certified nurses, EMT folks. Many of them are choosing to join the military and will contribute to our country in this way. And looking out as I was speaking to them and then shaking their hands and giving them hugs and high-fives and all the things that kids do on a graduation, I thought to myself: How could we not want to invest in these kids? And imagine all the kids across the country who are just as talented and vibrant and full of potential, and the idea that we wouldn't want to make sure that they're getting the best start through early education or that we wouldn't want to make sure that they had a well-funded school that had both the teachers and curriculum and technology they need to succeed in the 21st century.

Why wouldn't we want to make sure that college was affordable and that they weren't burdened with $30,000 or $50,000 or $70,000 worth of debt? Why wouldn't we want to create an economic environment in which in their first job, if they're working full time, they're not living in poverty, and that they can save a little bit and they're getting a fair wage? And if they get sick, that we know that they've got coverage and they don't have to go to the emergency room. And when they have children of their own, that they can count on a good education system. Why wouldn't we want to do that?

About 30 to 40 percent of the kids in this school, by the way, are DREAM kids. They're children of immigrants. You wouldn't know it looking at them, because they are as American as apple pie. But every single one of these kids, you might not be able to tell the difference, but a whole bunch of them, they're worried about whether or not they're going to be able to finance their college education of their immigrant status. They're worried about whether, in fact, this country that they love so deeply loves them back and understands that our future rests on their success. Why wouldn't we want to give them that certainty that you are part of the fabric of this Nation, we're counting on you, and we're going to make sure you succeed? Why wouldn't we want to do that?

That's what you're here for. That's what this evening is about. That's what my Presidency has been about. That's what the next 6 months is going to be about leading up to the midterms. Are we going to make those values that we care so deeply about—because we benefited from them, because those are the values that make America exceptional—will they manifest themselves not just next year or 5 years from now, but 20 years from now and 40 years from now? And the only way I'm going to be able to do that is to make sure that we've got a strong showing in these midterms. I'm not on the ballot, but this is my last race, because the better we do in the midterms, the more likely we are to get the things done that everybody in this room knows needs to be done.

Now, even as we campaign, I'm still trying to get things done as we speak. Some of you saw that there was an interesting election yesterday. And it's interesting to listen to the pundits and the analysts, and some of the conventional wisdom talks about, oh, the politics of immigration reform seem impossible now. I fundamentally reject that. And I will tell the Speaker of the House that he needs to reject that. Because if you met those kids today, you'd know that politics can't play a part in it.

I mean, if you think that because of politics you want to maintain a status quo that's broken, because of politics we're going to forego the economic growth and the deficit reduction and the border security and the fairness and the opportunity that immigration reform represents, you don't belong in Washington. Because at a certain point, the issues are important enough to fight for. And my argument about yesterday's election is not that there was too little politics, it's that there was too little conviction about what's right.

We need to get immigration reform done. We need to rebuild our infrastructure around this country. We need to invest in basic research and science. We need to make sure that we have equal pay for equal work. We need to make sure that we've got a strong minimum wage. And we can debate the issues, but we need to have a sense of urgency about the

struggles that middle class families and those who want to get into the middle class, what they're going through, and those kids that I spoke to today, the struggles that they're going to be facing as they leave that high school. That's what tonight is about.

So I know I'm preaching to the choir here, which is okay, but I'd leave you with this thought before I take questions: Democrats do have one congenital disease, and that is that we don't vote during midterms and we don't feel the same sense of urgency during midterms, and we like the Presidential races and the hoopla and the glitz. But this is where the rubber hits the road. I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that the House of Representatives does the right thing, that we no longer have one extreme faction that is blocking what the majority of the American people want to see happen with comprehensive immigration reform.

But it would be a whole lot easier if Democrats vote in the midterms. On every one of these subjects, whether it's climate change or minimum wage, I'm taking steps that don't require congressional action, but we can make a whole lot more progress if we're voting in the midterms. And the only way that we're able to get the turnout that we need and the urgency that we need and the enthusiasm that we need is if all of you feel that same sense of urgency, if you are as engaged and as committed as so many of you were in 2008, 2012, and Deval's campaign.

You got to feel in your gut that this is really important and put everything you got into it. That's what I'm going to do, despite having told Michelle that I'd already run my last campaign. [*Laughter*] It turns out, I had to tell her I've got one more left.

Thank you for what you've already done, but we're going to have to do a little bit more. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:29 p.m. at the residence of Paul and Joanne Egerman. In his remarks, he referred to former Sen. William M. "Mo" Cowan, who was appointed by Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts to assume office on an interim basis following the resignation of former Sen. John F. Kerry; Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Edward J. Markey; Sen. Michael F. Bennet in his capacity as chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; and Sheila Harrity, principal, Worcester Technical High School in Worcester, MA. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia and an Exchange With Reporters
June 12, 2014

President Obama. Well, it's wonderful to have an opportunity to visit with Prime Minister Abbott. We had a chance to meet when I had the great honor of addressing the Australian Parliament. And we are so glad to be able to return the favor in the Prime Minister's first visit here to the Oval Office.

We don't have a better friend in the world, as well as the Asia-Pacific region, than Australia. They are a treaty ally. We cooperate on a whole range of issues. Historically, there hasn't been a fight that the United States was in that Australia wasn't standing shoulder to shoulder with us. And most recently, in Afghanistan, Australian troops have made enormous contributions and made enormous sacrifices, and we're very grateful to them for that.

We had the opportunity this morning to discuss a wide range of issues, many of them focused on the importance of the Asia-Pacific region. We discussed the security cooperation that is continuing to deepen between our two nations as treaty allies. In addition to the marines that are now in Darwin and the rotations that have been established, we actually have arrived at additional agreements around force postures that will enhance the bilateral cooperation between our militaries and give us addi-

tional reach throughout this very important part of the world. And we're grateful for the cooperation there.

I should note that Australia, under the Prime Minister's leadership, is increasing its defense budget, even under tough times, recognizing that we all have to make sure that we're doing our fair share to help maintain global order and security.

We had an opportunity to discuss the strong commercial ties between our two countries. And both of us have been very invested in trying to bring the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the TPP, to a successful outcome. Negotiations continue, but Australia has been a very constructive partner in that process, and we both agree that not only can this agreement help to bring about jobs and growth for our respective populations, but it will also help establish the kinds of norms and free market principles throughout the region that will be important for our long-term prosperity.

We had an opportunity to discuss the work that we try to do in the region with organizations like ASEAN to maintain basic rules of the road when it comes to maritime issues, the South China Sea. Obviously, both the United States and Australia have enormous trade relationships with China, and we both agree that it's important to continue to see China prosper and rise. But what's also important is that as China emerges as this great world power that it also is helping to reinforce and abide by basic international law and norms.

And we had an opportunity to discuss some of the hotspots and international concerns that are on the front page of the papers over the last several weeks and months. I shared with him my views after my trip to Europe about the situation in Ukraine and the possibility of still resolving that issue in a diplomatic fashion, but thanked the Australians for joining with us and being firm with the Russians about their need to abide by international law and the application of sanctions and other consequences when they do not.

We discussed the situation in the Middle East and obviously the concerns that we have around Iraq and Syria. Both our countries are potentially threatened by jihadists and freedom fighters, as they call them, that are going into Syria, getting trained in terrorist tactics, and then potentially coming back to our countries and could end up being a significant threat to our homeland as well.

And we also had an opportunity to talk about North Korea and the continuing threat there and the importance for us to maintain vigilance, including additional coordination around protection from potential missile strikes from North Korea.

Finally, I've indicated to the Prime Minister that I'm very much looking forward to visiting Australia—one of my favorite countries to visit—for the G–20. And I assured him that we want to cooperate in any ways that we can to ensure that Australia's renowned hospitality is also coupled with a very productive set of G–20 meetings to talk global growth.

So I think that the Prime Minister and I share a whole range of concerns, but we also see a whole range of opportunities out there for increased cooperation. And I'm very glad that he's had the chance to come by today and have a very productive meeting.

So thank you, Tony.

Prime Minister Abbott. Well, thank you so much, Barack. This has been a really full and thorough engagement over the last hour or so. Obviously, I'm here to thank the United States for its deepening engagement in our region. I'm here to further entrench our security and our economic cooperation. I'm here to celebrate the extraordinary friendship between the Australian and the American peoples. And I'm thrilled to have you coming to the G–20 in November, because we have a very important job in November in Brisbane: to accelerate economic growth around the world so that we have more prosperity and more jobs.

Obviously, right now there are a whole range of security issues which the United States is leading on and where Australia is doing our part to secure the freedom and the safety of the world and its citizens. I want to assure the President that Australia will be an utterly dependable ally of the United States. The United States has had to bear many burdens,

many burdens. The United States has paid a very high price to secure freedom and prosperity for many countries, not just itself. And the United States should never have to do all that work on its own.

So it's been a terrific discussion. And I think that many good things will come from this meeting today.

President Obama. Well, thank you, Tony. I'm going to take just one question. Nedra [Nedra Pickler, Associated Press].

Iraq/U.S. Counterterrorism Efforts/International Security Cooperation

Q. Mr. President, are you considering drone strikes or any sort of action to stop the insurgents in Iraq?

President Obama. Well, this is an area that we've been watching with a lot of concern not just over the last couple of days, but over the last several months, and we've been in close consultation with the Iraqi Government. Over the last year, we have been providing them additional assistance to try to address the problems that they have in Anbar, in the northwestern portions of the country, as well as the Iraqi and Syrian border. That includes, in some cases, military equipment. It includes intelligence assistance. It includes a whole host of issues.

But what we've seen over the last couple of days indicates the degree to which Iraq is going to need more help. It's going to need more help from us, and it's going to need more help from the international community.

So my team is working around the clock to identify how we can provide the most effective assistance to them. I don't rule out anything, because we do have a stake in making sure that these jihadists are not getting a permanent foothold in either Iraq or Syria, for that matter.

Part of the challenge—and I've said this directly to Prime Minister Maliki, and Vice President Biden has said this in his very frequent interactions with the Iraqi Government—is that the politics of Shia and Sunni inside of Iraq, as well as the Kurds, is either going to be a help in dealing with this jihadist situation, or it's going to be a hindrance. And frankly, over the last several years, we have not seen the kind of trust and cooperation develop between moderate Sunni and Shia leaders inside of Iraq, and that accounts in part for some of the weakness of the state, and that then carries over into their military capacity.

So I think it's fair to say that in our consultations with the Iraqis, there will be some short-term, immediate things that need to be done militarily, and our national security team is looking at all the options. But this should be also a wakeup call for the Iraqi Government. There has to be a political component to this so that Sunni and Shia who care about building a functioning state that can bring about security and prosperity to all people inside of Iraq come together and work diligently against these extremists. And that is going to require concessions on the part of both Shia and Sunni that we haven't seen so far.

The last point I'll make: This—what's happened over the last couple of days, I think, underscores the importance of the point that I made at my West Point speech, the need for us to have a more robust regional approach to partnering and training partner countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa. We're not going to be able to be everywhere all the time, but what we can do is to make sure that we are consistently helping to finance, train, advise military forces with partner countries, including Iraq, that have the capacity to maintain their own security. And that is a long and laborious process, but it's one that we need to get started.

That's part of what the counterterrorism partnership fund that I am going to be calling for Congress to help finance is all about, giving us the capacity to extend our reach without sending U.S. troops to play Whac-A-Mole wherever there ends up being a problem in a particular country. That's going to be more effective. It's going to be more legitimate in the eyes of people in the region, as well as the international community. But it's going to take time for us to build it. In the short term, we have to deal with what clearly is an emergency situation in Iraq.

Prime Minister Abbott. Perhaps, Barack, I might take one question. David Spears [Sky News].

U.S. Foreign Policy/International Security Cooperation/Australia-U.S. Defense Relationship

Q. Mr. President, just on that point you made there about limitations of American power, what would it take for military intervention, be it in the Middle East, be it in the Asia-Pacific region? Where is the line drawn?

President Obama. Well, I gave a very long speech about all this, so I probably would refer you to that as opposed to repeating it. But the basic principle obviously is, is that we, like all nations, are prepared to take military action whenever our national security is threatened. Where the issues have to do with the broader international order—humanitarian concerns, concerns around rights to navigation, concerns around our ability to deal with instability or fragile states or failed states, and the consequences for populations there and refugee flows—those sorts of international issues, wherever we can, our preference should be to partner with other countries. We're going to be more effective if we can work with other nations.

Q. What role can Australia play?

President Obama. And that's why—well, that's part of where Australia is so important to us. There are a handful of countries in the world that we always know we can count on, not just because they share our values, but we know we can count on them because they've got real capacity. Australia is one of those countries. We share foundational values about liberal democracies and human rights and a world view that's governed by international law and norms. And Aussies know how to fight, and I like having them in a foxhole if we're in trouble. So I can't think of a better partner.

Part of our task now in a world where it's less likely that any particular nation attacks us or our treaty allies directly, but rather, more typically, that you have disorder, asymmetric threats, terrorist organizations—all of which can be extraordinarily disruptive and damaging, but aren't the traditional types of war that so often we've been equipped to fight—it becomes that much more important for us to start building new partners——

Q. You——

President Obama. ——who aren't going to be as capable as the Australians right away, aren't going to be as capable as our own troops. And that's going to take some time. It's going to take some resources, but we need to start now. We've learned some lessons over the last decade, and we need to start applying them. All right?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:16 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks Honoring the 2013 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Minnesota Lynx
June 12, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Please, please, have a seat. Welcome to the White House. And give it up for our special guests, the 2013 WNBA Champions, "Los Lynx," the Minnesota Lynx. [*Applause*] Hey! We happen also to have some fierce Lynx fans, including Congressman Tim Walz, who is here, and I understand that Mayor Chris Coleman just arrived. So give them both a big round of applause. Chris is around here somewhere. There he is back there. Stand up, Chris, so everybody can see you. Take credit.

Now, in 2012, when the Lynx came here after their first title, I said I had a feeling I might see them again before I left office. [*Laughter*] I just want to mention that I was right. [*Laughter*] And so you can fact-check that, PolitiFact. I got that one right. [*Laughter*]

One of your assistant coaches, Shelley Patterson, put it pretty simply: "Winning is what we like to do." And it shows. Over the last 3

years, Coach Cheryl Reeve has led the Lynx to the WNBA's best record, winning more than three-quarters of your games, making it three straight championship series. That's pretty good. Last year, Seimone Augustus issued one of the strangest apologies in sports. I've never heard this before. She said, "I'm sorry if we make it look too easy." [*Laughter*] That's a good problem to have.

But you began last season with something to prove. In 2012, a tough loss to the Indiana Fever in the finals kept you from a second straight championship. So in 2013, you set out for a little redemption, and to put it mildly, you succeeded.

You did not only go 26–8 in the regular season, but you also swept the playoffs, a perfect 7–0. You won it with all-star talent, from Seimone to Rebekkah Brunson, hometown hero Lindsay Whalen. You did it with fellow all-star and Finals MVP Maya Moore, who has now been here so many times, I've lost track. [*Laughter*] I mean, basically, there's like a Maya Moore wing in the White House. [*Laughter*] And when she comes, we kind of—we've got all her stuff here; she's got a toothbrush and—[*laughter*].

And you did it with all-star teamwork. On the road, in the clinching game of the finals, all five starters scored in double digits. Last season, Lindsay set a new franchise record for assists after just 88 games, a mark that took 205 games to set in the first place. Just gives you a sense of how good she is. Lindsay can play.

But bringing home titles isn't the only thing that's earned "Los Lynx" fans throughout Minnesota. These young women are outstanding members of the community. They make time to help local students with their reading. I hear they clean up pretty well for their annual "Catwalk for a Cure" fashion show—[*laughter*]—that raises money for breast cancer research, so I'm going to have to look that up.

I also want to thank this team, as I always tell them, for being great examples for my daughters and for girls across the country. We know that when young women are involved in sports, they do better across the board. [*Applause*] They do better across the board. And when the WNBA first said, "We've got next," some folks didn't think a professional basketball league could make it. That was 18 seasons ago. And so we're excited to see not only where the Lynx are going to go in the future, but every NBA—WNBA team for years to come. And one of the things I'd like to see is a Chicago Sky title. It's been a while. [*Laughter*] A really, really—a long while. But it's—it might happen in the future.

So today, of course, our job is to congratulate this outstanding team standing behind me, the 2013 Champions, Minnesota Lynx. Good luck with the rest of your season. And I understand—I don't know, Coach, if you want to say something. I know—I think Maya, who basically feels like she owns the place, wants to say a few words. [*Laughter*]

Head Coach Cheryl Reeve. I'll defer to Maya.

The President. All right, come on.

Forward Maya Moore. Man, what a birthday treat. Thank you to my teammates.

The President. Happy birthday. I didn't know that.

Ms. Moore. Yes, yesterday. It's all week, don't worry. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay. [*Laughter*] Malia and Sasha do the same thing. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Moore. It's reduced down from a month; now it's a week.

I just can't speak enough about this team behind me. It's really just been an awesome 3 years, going into my fourth year, and even before that, the foundation that was being built with Seimone, Coach Reeve, and all the other captains. But every year, it starts at Mr. Taylor's house, our awesome owner, who has provided—[*applause*]—yes.

Like Mr. President said, if we don't have opportunities to compete in sports and to play in sports, you don't get to see us up here today. So to have somebody that believes in us, Mr. Taylor, Becky, we appreciate you. We have our annual dinner at their house where we all come together. And as the rookies got to see, we're really a family. And what you see behind me right now is very genuine, how we treat each other, the passion that we play with. Our leaders, with Coach Reeve, Jim, and Shelley, the tireless work that they put in, and they

don't want any credit. They do their jobs to perfection.

And last year, we didn't start out with that hot streak that we did our first 2 years; we had a little trouble in the beginning. And then, we also hit a rough patch towards the end of the season, losing four out of five games. I know. Gasp. [*Laughter*] And it was a struggle. We were in Chicago—this will make you feel good—[*laughter*]—playing against an awesome rookie in Elena Delle Donne, and she ended up hitting a game-winning three. A heartbreaking loss for us on the road. And our captain—one of our captains, Lindsay Whalen, you wouldn't have known this, but she took that loss on herself. She cares so much about this team and really just took it personal and hard. And that's really the heart of our team and the heart of this club. We care. And it shows when we're on the court, when we're together, when we're in the community. And I think that's what our Nation is about. We care, we're leaders in that. And that's why this team is so special not just talent-wise, but just the people that I've been blessed to play with.

So, hopefully, we can continue to make this an annual trip, and I want to see that room you're talking about. [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you.

Ms. Moore. You're welcome. Thank you.

The President. Thank you.

Ms. Moore. We have something for you.

The President. What do you got?

Ms. Moore. We have a little treat for you for 2013.

[*At this point, the President was presented with a team jersey.*]

The President. All right. Very nice. Very nice. It's got the number.

So let's strike the podium so we can get a good picture here. Come on. I'm going to slide right in here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Christopher B. Coleman of Saint Paul, MN; Seimone Augustus and Lindsay Whalen, guards, Rebekkah Brunson, forward, and Janel McCarville, center, Minnesota Lynx. Ms. Moore referred to Glen Taylor, owner, and Jim Petersen, assistant coach, Minnesota Lynx; Becky Taylor, wife of Mr. Taylor; and Elena Delle Donne, guard/forward, Chicago Sky.

Statement on the Death of Ruby Dee
June 12, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to hear of the passing of actress, author, and activist Ruby Dee. In roles from Ruth Younger in "A Raisin in the Sun" to Mama Lucas in "American Gangster," Ruby captivated and challenged us. And Michelle and I will never forget seeing her on our first date as Mother Sister in "Do the Right Thing." Through her remarkable performances, Ruby paved the way for generations of Black actors and actresses and inspired African American women across our country. Through her leadership in the civil rights movement, she and her husband Ossie Davis helped open new doors of opportunity for all. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ruby and Ossie's three children, with their friends and family, and with all those who loved them dearly.

NOTE: The statement referred to Nora Davis Day, Hasna Muhammad, and Guy Davis, children of Ms. Dee.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces
June 12, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. Armed Forces equipped for combat.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM OBJECTIVES

In furtherance of U.S. counterterrorism efforts, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe, with a particular focus on the U.S. Central Command's and U.S. Africa Command's areas of responsibility. In this context, the United States has deployed U.S. combat-equipped forces to enhance the counterterrorism capabilities and support the counterterrorism operations of our friends and allies, including special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations around the world. Specific information about counterterrorism deployments to select countries is provided below, and a classified annex to this report provides further information.

Military Operations Against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and Associated Forces and in Support of Related U.S. Counterterrorism Objectives

Since October 7, 2001, the United States has conducted combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces. In support of these and other overseas operations, the United States has deployed combat-equipped forces to a number of locations in the U.S. Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation. Such operations and deployments have been reported previously, consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution, and operations and deployments remain ongoing. These operations, which the United States has carried out with the assistance of numerous international partners, have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qa'ida's capabilities and brought an end to the Taliban's leadership of Afghanistan. As necessary, in response to this terrorist threat, I will direct additional measures to protect U.S. citizens and interests. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployments of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter this terrorist threat to the United States.

Afghanistan. United States Armed Forces have transitioned the lead for security to Afghan security forces while striking significant blows against al-Qa'ida's leadership and preventing Afghanistan from being used to launch attacks against our homeland. On May 27, I announced my decision to end the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan at the end of 2014 and to maintain a limited number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan beyond the end of 2014, contingent on the next Afghan president signing and concluding the United States-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement shortly after he takes office. Maintaining these forces in Afghanistan would be for the purposes of training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces and supporting counterterrorism operations against the remnants of al-Qa'ida.

The U.N. Security Council most recently extended its authorization of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan until December 31, 2014, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2120 (October 10, 2013). The mission of ISAF, under North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) command and in partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, is to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF), and facilitate improvements in governance and

socio-economic development in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability. Forty-eight nations, including the United States and all 28 NATO members, contribute forces to ISAF. For the last few years, the ISAF campaign has focused on preparing the ANSF for full security transition in 2014.

Since June 2013, the ANSF have been in the lead for security nationwide and have been conducting the overwhelming majority of operations. ISAF is now in support of the ANSF, and the only unilateral operations that ISAF conducts are in support of its own security, sustainment, and redeployment. In the coming months, ISAF will focus on developing the sustainability of the ANSF at the corps and ministerial levels. The security transition process—as agreed to at the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon and reaffirmed at the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago—remains on track, and the ANSF are expected to assume full responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

There are approximately 32,800 U.S. forces in Afghanistan as part of ISAF and additional forces supporting the retrograde of U.S. equipment and other U.S. national missions. The U.S. Armed Forces are on track to draw down to a Force Management Level of 9,800 troops by January 1, 2015. By the end of 2016, U.S. forces would draw down to a small presence at our embassy in Kabul, focusing primarily on security assistance activities. In accordance with the mutual commitments agreed to by Afghanistan and the United States in the 2012 Strategic Partnership Agreement, this embassy presence would continue to support Afghan political and economic development that contributes to overall stability and to administer security assistance. The United States would continue to work with our Afghan partners to pursue the remnants of al-Qa'ida and more broadly to work with our partners in the region to continue to detect and disrupt extremist threats.

As I noted in my report of December 13, 2013, on March 25, 2013, the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Afghan government under which the United States transferred all Afghan nationals detained by U.S. forces in Afghanistan to the custody and control of the Afghan government. Pursuant to the MOU, any new Afghan detainees are to be transferred to Afghan custody and control within 96 hours after capture. United States forces in Afghanistan continue to detain approximately 38 third-country nationals under the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40), as informed by the law of war.

Somalia. In Somalia, a small contingent of U.S. military personnel, including some special operations forces, has worked to counter the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida and associated elements of al-Shabaab. On January 26, 2014, U.S. Armed Forces conducted a counterterrorism strike in Somalia.

Yemen. The U.S. military has also been working closely with the Yemeni government to operationally dismantle and ultimately eliminate the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the most active and dangerous affiliate of al-Qa'ida today. Our joint efforts have resulted in direct action against a limited number of AQAP operatives and senior leaders in that country who posed a terrorist threat to the United States and our interests.

Cuba. Combat-equipped forces, deployed since January 2002 to the Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, continue to conduct humane and secure detention operations for the 149 detainees at Guantanamo Bay under the authority provided by the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40), as informed by the law of war.

Military Operations in Niger in Support of U.S. Counterterrorism Objectives

As indicated in my report of December 13, 2013, U.S. military personnel in Niger continue to provide support for intelligence collection and to facilitate intelligence sharing with French forces conducting operations in Mali and with other partners in the region. The total number of U.S. military personnel deployed to Niger is approximately 200.

Military Operations in Chad in Support of Efforts to Locate Schoolgirls Kidnapped in Nigeria

As indicated in my report of May 21, 2014, U.S. military personnel are deployed to Chad to support U.S. intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations to locate and support the safe return of more than 200 schoolgirls reported to be kidnapped in Nigeria. The total number of U.S. military personnel deployed to Chad for this purpose is approximately 80.

MILITARY OPERATIONS RELATED TO THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

In October and November 2011, U.S. military personnel with appropriate combat equipment initially deployed to Uganda to serve as advisors to regional forces of the African Union Regional Task Force (AU–RTF) that are working to apprehend or remove Joseph Kony and other senior Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leaders from the battlefield, and to protect local populations. To enhance this support, as detailed in my report of March 25, 2014, approximately 150 additional U.S. forces deployed to central Africa principally to operate and maintain U.S. aircraft providing air mobility support to foreign partner forces. The aircraft and personnel providing the enhanced air mobility support will deploy to the LRA-affected areas of central Africa episodically, as they are available, consistent with other Department of Defense requirements. During these deployments, the number of U.S. military personnel deployed to the central Africa region, including advisors deployed for this mission and personnel providing logistical and support functions to this and other missions, will fluctuate at a level up to approximately 300.

United States forces are working with select partner nation forces of the AU–RTF to enhance cooperation, information-sharing and synchronization, operational planning, and overall effectiveness. These forces, however, will not engage LRA forces except in self-defense. It is in the U.S. national security interest to help our regional partners in Africa to develop their capability to address threats to regional peace and security, including the threat posed by the LRA. The United States is pursuing a comprehensive strategy to help the governments and people of this region in their efforts to end the threat posed by the LRA and to address the impact of the LRA's atrocities.

Additional information about military operations related to the Lord's Resistance Army is provided in the classified annex.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EGYPT

Approximately 700 military personnel are assigned to the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force and Observers, which have been present in Egypt since 1981.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN JORDAN

As detailed in my report of June 21, 2013, at the request of the Government of Jordan, U.S. Armed Forces elements, including Patriot missile systems, fighter aircraft, and related support, command, control, and communications personnel and systems, are deployed to Jordan to support the security of Jordan and promote regional stability. The total number of U.S. forces in Jordan is approximately 1,700 U.S. military personnel. These forces will remain in Jordan, in full coordination with the Government of Jordan, until the security situation becomes such that they are no longer needed.

U.S./NATO OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO

The U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999. The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, verify, and, when necessary, enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the then-Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities in cooperation with local authorities, bilateral partners, and international institutions. The principal military tasks of KFOR forces are to help maintain a safe and secure environment and to

ensure freedom of movement throughout Kosovo.

Currently, 23 NATO Allies contribute to KFOR. Seven non-NATO countries also participate. The U.S. contribution to KFOR is approximately 758 U.S. military personnel out of the total strength of approximately 5,600 personnel.

REGIONAL SECURITY OPERATIONS

As stated in my report of December 13, 2013, U.S. Armed Forces remain in Libya and Yemen to support the security of U.S. personnel. These forces will remain deployed, in full coordination with the respective host governments, until the security situation no longer requires them.

As noted in my December 19 and 22, 2013, reports, U.S. Armed Forces deployed to South Sudan to support the security of U.S. personnel and our embassy, and to evacuate U.S. citizens and personnel. These operations are completed and the forces have subsequently redeployed after transitioning security support to a Marine Security Augmentation Unit.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional and statutory authority as Commander in Chief (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107–40 and other statutes) and as Chief Executive, as well as my constitutional and statutory authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks on the Situation in Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters
June 13, 2014

The President. Good morning, everybody. I wanted to take some time to give you a quick update about the situation in Iraq.

Yesterday I convened a meeting with my National Security Council to discuss the situation there, and this morning I received an update from my team. Over the last several days, we've seen significant gains made by ISIL, a terrorist organization that operates in both Iraq and in Syria. In the face of a terrorist offensive, Iraqi security forces have proven unable to defend a number of cities, which has allowed the terrorists to overrun a part of Iraq's territory. And this poses a danger to Iraq and its people. And given the nature of these terrorists, it could pose a threat eventually to American interests as well.

Now, this threat is not brand new. Over the last year, we've been steadily ramping up our security assistance to the Iraqi Government with increased training, equipping, and intelligence. Now, Iraq needs additional support to break the momentum of extremist groups and bolster the capabilities of Iraqi security forces. We will not be sending U.S. troops back into combat in Iraq, but I have asked my national security team to prepare a range of other options that could help support Iraq security forces, and I'll be reviewing those options in the days ahead.

I do want to be clear though: This is not solely or even primarily a military challenge. Over the past decade, American troops have made extraordinary sacrifices to give Iraqis an opportunity to claim their own future. Unfortunately, Iraqis' leaders have been unable to overcome too often the mistrust and sectarian differences that have long been simmering there, and that's created vulnerabilities within the Iraqi Government as well as their security forces.

So any action that we may take to provide assistance to Iraqi security forces has to be joined by a serious and sincere effort by Iraq's

leaders to set aside sectarian differences, to promote stability and account for the legitimate interests of all of Iraq's communities, and to continue to build the capacity of an effective security force. We can't do it for them. And in the absence of this type of political effort, short-term military action, including any assistance we might provide, won't succeed.

So this should be a wakeup call. Iraq's leaders have to demonstrate a willingness to make hard decisions and compromises on behalf of the Iraqi people in order to bring the country together. In that effort, they will have the support of the United States and our friends and our allies.

Now, Iraq's neighbors have—also have some responsibilities to support this process. Nobody has an interest in seeing terrorists gain a foothold inside of Iraq, and nobody is going to benefit from seeing Iraq descend into chaos. So the United States will do our part, but understand that ultimately, it's up to the Iraqis, as a sovereign nation, to solve their problems.

Indeed, across the region we have redoubled our efforts to help build more capable counterterrorism forces so that groups like ISIL can't establish safe haven. And we'll continue that effort through our support of the moderate opposition in Syria, our support for Iraq and its security forces, and our partnership with other countries across the region.

We're also going to pursue intensive diplomacy throughout this period both inside of Iraq and across the region, because there's never going to be stability in Iraq or the broader region unless there are political outcomes that allow people to resolve their differences peacefully without resorting to war or relying on the United States military.

We'll be monitoring the situation in Iraq very carefully over the next several days. Our top priority will remain being vigilant against any threats to our personnel serving overseas. We will consult closely with Congress as we make determinations about appropriate action, and we'll continue to keep the American people fully informed as we make decisions about the way forward. All right?

I'll take a question.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Iraq/Reconciliation Efforts

Q. Mr. President, given the recent U.S. history there, are you reluctant to get involved again in Iraq?

The President. I think that we should look at the situation carefully. We have an interest in making sure that a group like ISIL, which is a vicious organization and has been able to take advantage of the chaos in Syria, that they don't get a broader foothold. I think there are dangers of fierce sectarian fighting if, for example, the terrorist organizations try to overrun sacred Shia sites, which could trigger Shia-Sunni conflicts that could be very hard to stamp out.

So we have enormous interests there. And obviously, our troops and the American people and the American taxpayers made huge investments and sacrifices in order to give Iraqis the opportunity to chart a better course, a better destiny. But ultimately, they're going to have to seize it. As I said before, we are not going to be able to do it for them. And given the very difficult history that we've seen in Iraq, I think that any objective observer would recognize that in the absence of accommodation among the various factions inside of Iraq, various military actions by the United States—by any outside nation—are not going to solve those problems over the long term and not going to deliver the kind of stability that we need.

Anybody else?

Syria/Iraq/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Counterterrorism Efforts

Q. Mr. President, is the Syrian civil war spilling over the Iraq border? And what can we do to stop it?

The President. Well, I think that's been happening for some time. ISIL has been able to gain a foothold in Syria. That's part of the reason why we've been so concerned about it. That's part of the reason why we've been supporting the Syrian opposition there. But it's challenging problem.

In Iraq, the Iraqi Government, which was initially resistant to some of our offers of help,

has come around now to recognize that cooperation with us on some of these issues can be useful. Obviously, that's not the case in Syria where President Asad has no interest in seeing us involved there, and where some of the governments that are supporting Asad have been able to block, for example, U.N. efforts even at humanitarian aid. But this is a regional problem and it is going to be a long-term problem.

And what we're going to have to do is combine selective actions by our military to make sure that we're going after terrorists who could harm our personnel overseas or eventually hit the homeland. We're going to have to combine that with what is a very challenging international effort to try to rebuild countries and communities that have been shattered by sectarian war. And that's not an easy task.

Iraq/International Diplomatic Efforts/Iraqi Armed Forces

Q. Mr. President, which foreign countries have you been in touch with? And what are they willing to do as part of this international effort?

The President. Well, we're in contact with them now. So we'll have a better sense by the end of the weekend, after those consultations. And we will be getting a better sense from them of how they might support an effort to bring about the kind of political unity inside of Iraq that bolsters security forces.

Look, the United States has poured a lot of money into these Iraqi security forces, and we devoted a lot of training to Iraqi security forces. The fact that they are not willing to stand and fight and defend their posts against admittedly hardened terrorists, but not terrorists who are overwhelming in numbers, indicates that there's a problem with morale, there's a problem in terms of commitment. And ultimately, that's rooted in the political problems that have plagued the country for a very long time.

Last question. Last one.

Iraq/Oil Supply and Refining/Reconciliation Efforts

Q. Thank you. Can you talk a little bit about U.S. concern of the disruption of oil supplies?

The President. Well, so far, at least, we have not seen major disruptions in oil supplies. Obviously, if in fact ISIL was able to obtain control over major output, significant refineries, that could be a source of concern. As you might expect, world oil markets react to any kind of instability in the Middle East. One of our goals should be to make sure that in cooperation with other countries in the region not only are we creating some sort of backstop in terms of what's happening inside of Iraq, but if there do end up being disruptions inside of Iraq, that some of the other producers in the Gulf are able to pick up the slack. So that will be part of the consultations that will be taking place during the course of this week.

Just to give people a sense of timing here, although events on the ground in Iraq have been happening very quickly, our ability to plan, whether it's military action or work with the Iraqi Government on some of these political issues, is going to take several days. So people should not anticipate that this is something that is going to happen overnight. We want to make sure that we have good eyes on the situation there. We want to make sure that we've gathered all the intelligence that's necessary so that if in fact I do direct and order any actions there, that they're targeted, they're precise, and they're going to have an effect.

And as I indicated before—and I want to make sure that everybody understands this message—the United States is not simply going to involve itself in a military action in the absence of a political plan by the Iraqis that gives us some assurance that they're prepared to work together. We're not going to allow ourselves to be dragged back into a situation in which, while we're there, we're keeping a lid on things, and after enormous sacrifices by us, as soon as we're not there, suddenly, people end up acting in ways that are not conducive to

the long-term stability and prosperity of the country.

All right, thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at a Flag Day Celebration at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in Cannon Ball, North Dakota
June 13, 2014

The President. Hello, Dakota Nation! Hello, Lakota Nation! Chairman Archambault; tribal leaders; people of Standing Rock; people of Indian Country; Michelle and I are so honored to be in this sacred and beautiful place. It's easy to see why it's called God's country. And because I'm among friends, I'm going to try something in Lakota. But I can't guarantee it's going to come out perfect. *Háu, mitákuyepi!* I'm going to practice. I'm going to be even better next time. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back!

Audience member. You're my hero!

The President. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Governor Jack Dalrymple and the Members of Congress who are here today: Senator Heidi Heitkamp, Senator John Hoeven, Congressman Kevin Cramer. We're so grateful that you took the time to be here.

And I know that your annual Flag Day powwow officially begins this evening. So we're a little early. But thank you for giving us a sneak peek of the celebration. And we are grateful for the chance to pay tribute to all the veterans of America's Armed Forces who have joined us here today, as well as those who have walked on, and whose flags are proudly displayed here today. Thank you and to your families for your extraordinary service. We are very, very grateful. I also want to acknowledge our outstanding Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewel, who is here.

This visit holds special meaning for me.

Audience member. We love Michelle too!

The President. Of course you love Michelle. Who doesn't love Michelle? [*Laughter*]

When I was first running for President, I had the honor of visiting the Crow Nation in Montana. And today I'm proud to be making my first trip to Indian Country as President of the United States.

I know that throughout history, the United States often didn't give the nation-to-nation relationship the respect that it deserved. So I promised when I ran to be a President who'd change that: a President who honors our sacred trust, and who respects your sovereignty and upholds treaty obligations, and who works with you in a spirit of true partnership and mutual respect to give our children the future that they deserve.

And today I'm proud that the government-to-government relationship between Washington and tribal nations is stronger than ever. Sally Jewell has been doing great work—her predecessor, Ken Salazar, did great work—to make sure that we were listening to you. And as head of our new Council on Native American Affairs, she makes sure that the Federal Government and tribal governments are coordinating with each other at all times. And Kevin Washburn, my Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs and a member of the Chickasaw Nation, is here as well.

You see, my administration is determined to partner with tribes, and it's not something that just happens once in a while. It takes place every day, on just about every issue that touches your lives. And that's what real nation-to-nation partnerships look like.

We've responded and resolved longstanding disputes. George Keepseagle is here today. A few years ago, my administration reached a historic settlement with George and other American Indian farmers and ranchers. And I signed into law the historic *Cobell* settlement, leading to the Land Buy-Back Program, a 9—or a $1.9 billion fund to consolidate individual

Indian lands and restore them to tribal trust lands.

We've made major investments to help grow tribal economies: investments in job training and tribal colleges; roads and high-speed Internet; energy, including renewable energy. And thanks to the Affordable Care Act, Native Americans, like all Americans, finally have access to quality, affordable health care.

But I realize that a powwow isn't just about celebrating the past. It's also about looking to the future. It's about keeping sacred traditions alive for the next generation, for these beautiful children. So here today, I want to focus on the work that lies ahead. And I think we can follow the lead of Standing Rock's most famous resident, Chief Sitting Bull. He said, "Let's put our minds together to see what we can build for our children."

So let's put our minds together to build more economic opportunity in Indian Country, because every American, including every Native American, deserves the chance to work hard and get ahead—[*applause*]—everybody. That means creating more jobs and supporting small businesses in places like Standing Rock, because young people should be able to live and work and raise a family right here in the land of your fathers and mothers. Let's put our minds together to advance justice, because like every American, you deserve to be safe in your communities and treated equally under the law.

My administration has gone further than any in history to strengthen the sovereignty of tribal courts, particularly when it comes to criminal sentencing and prosecuting people who commit violence against women. And Standing Rock has done a terrific job at building a court system that is open and efficient and delivers justice to your people. So we want to support more tribes as they follow your lead and strengthen justice in our communities. And that includes protecting important rights like the right to vote, because every Native American deserves a voice in our democracy.

Let's put our minds together to improve our schools, because our children deserve a world-class education too, that prepares them for college and careers. And that means returning control of Indian education to tribal nations with additional resources and support so that you can direct your children's education and reform schools here in Indian Country. And even as they prepare for a global economy, we want children, like these wonderful young children here, learning about their language and learning about their culture, just like the boys and girls do at Lakota Language Nest here at Standing Rock. We want to make sure that continues and we build on that success.

Before we came here, Michelle and I sat with an amazing group of young people. I love these young people. I only spent an hour with them. I've—they feel like my own. And you should be proud of them, because they've overcome a lot, but they're strong, and they're still standing, and they're moving forward. And they're all proud of their culture. But they talked about the challenges of living in two worlds and being both "Native" and "American." And some bright young people like the ones we met today might look around and sometimes wonder if the United States really is thinking about them and caring about them and has a place for them too.

And when we were talking, I said, you know, Michelle and I knows what it feels like sometimes to go through tough times. We grew up at times feeling like we were on the outside looking in. But thanks to family and friends and teachers and coaches and neighbors that didn't give up on us, we didn't give up on ourselves. Just like these young people are not giving up on themselves. And we want every young person in America to have the same chance that we had, and that includes the boys and girls here in Indian Country.

There's no denying that for some Americans, the deck's been stacked against them, sometimes for generations. And that's been the case for many Native Americans. But if we're working together, we can make things better. We've got a long way to go. But if we do our part, I believe that we can turn the corner. We can break old cycles. We can give our children a better future. I know because I've talked to these young people. I know they can succeed. I

know they'll be leaders not just in Indian Country, but across America. And we've got to invest in them and believe in them and love them, and that starts from the White House all the way down here.

I understand that the Lakota word for "children"—*wakanyeja*—comes from the word *wakan*—"sacred." That's what young people are: They're sacred. They're sacred to your families, and they're sacred to your tribe, and they're sacred to this Nation. And every day that I have the honor of serving as your President, I will do everything I can to make sure that you see that our country has a place for everyone, including every single young person here and all across the Dakotas and all across America, and that you're getting the support and encouragement you need to go as far as your hard work and your talent will take you. That is my commitment to you, to every single young person here.

This community has made extraordinary contributions to the United States. Just look at all these flags. So many Native Americans have served our country with honor and with courage. And now it's up to us to keep strong what they've built, to keep America the place where no matter who you are and what you look like or where you come from, you can make it. And that you don't have to give up your culture to also be part of the American family. That's what I believe. And coming here today makes me believe it that much more.

Hechetu welo. Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:58 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Dave Archambault II of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

The President's Weekly Address
June 14, 2014

Hi, everybody. Sunday is Father's Day. If you haven't got Dad a gift yet, there is still time. Just barely. But the truth is, what we give our fathers can never match what our fathers can give us.

I know how important it is to have a dad in your life, because I grew up without my father around. I felt the weight of his absence. So for Michelle and our girls, I try every day to be the husband and father my family didn't have when I was young. And every chance I get, I encourage fathers to get more involved in their children's lives, because what makes you a man isn't the ability to have a child, it's the courage to raise one.

Still, over the past couple of years, I've met with a lot of young people who don't have a father figure around. And while there's nothing that can replace a parent, any of us can do our part to be a mentor, a sounding board, a role model for a kid who needs one. Earlier this year, I launched an initiative called "My Brother's Keeper," an all-hands-on-deck effort to help more of our young men reach their full potential. And if you want to be a mentor to a young man in your community, you can find out how at whitehouse.gov/mybrotherskeeper.

Now, when I launched this initiative, I said that government can't play the primary role in a young person's life. Taking responsibility for being a great parent or mentor is a choice that we, as individuals, have to make. No government program can ever take the place of a parent's love. Still, as a country, there are ways we can help support dads and moms who make that choice.

And that's why, earlier this week, we brought working dads from across America to the White House to talk about the challenges they face. And in a few weeks, I'll hold the first-ever White House Working Families Summit. We've still got too many workplace policies that belong in the 1950s, and it's time to bring them up to date for today's families, where oftentimes, both parents are working. Moms and dads deserve affordable childcare and time off to care for a sick parent or child without running into hardship. Women deserve equal pay for equal work, and at a time when more women are breadwinners for a

family, that benefits men too. And because no parent who works full time should have to raise a family in poverty, it's time for Congress to follow the lead of State after State, get on the bandwagon, and give America a raise.

Dads work hard. So our country should do what we can to make sure their hard work pays off, to make sure life for them and their families is a little less stressful, a little more secure so they can be the dads their kids need them to be. Because there's nothing more precious in life than the time we spend with our children. There's no better feeling than knowing that we can be there for them and provide for them and help give them every shot at success.

Let's make sure every dad who works hard and takes responsibility has the chance to know that feeling, not just on one Sunday, but every day of the year.

Thanks everybody. Happy Father's Day, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 10:45 a.m. on June 13 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on June 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 13, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 14.

Remarks at the Commencement Ceremony of the University of California, Irvine in Anaheim, California
June 14, 2014

Hello, Anteaters! That is something I never thought I'd say. [*Laughter*] Please, please take a seat.

To President Napolitano—which is a nice step up from Secretary; to Fred Ruiz, Vice Chair of the University of California Regents; Chancellor Drake; Representatives Loretta Sanchez and Alan Lowenthal; to the trustees and faculty: Thank you for this honor. And congratulations to the class of 2014!

Now, let me begin my saying all of you had the inside track in getting me here, because my personal assistant, Ferial, is a proud Anteater. Until today, I did not understand why she greets me every morning by shouting, "Zot, zot, zot!" [*Laughter*] It's been a little weird. But she explained it to me on the way here this morning, because she's very proud to see her brother Sina graduate today as well. So, graduates, obviously we're proud of you, but let's give it up for your proud family and friends and professors, because this is their day too.

And even though he's on the road this weekend, I also want to thank Angels centerfielder Mike Trout for letting me cover his turf for a while. He actually signed a bat for me, which is part of my retirement plan. [*Laughter*] I will be keeping that. And this is a pretty cool place to hold a commencement. I know that UC Irvine's baseball team opens College World Series play in Omaha right about now, so let's get this speech underway. If the hot dog guy comes by, get me one. [*Laughter*]

Now, in addition to Ferial, graduates, I'm here for a simple reason: You asked. For those who don't know, the UC Irvine community sent 10,000 postcards to the White House asking me to come speak today. Some tried to guilt me into coming. I got one that said, "I went to your first Inauguration, can you please come to my graduation?" [*Applause*] That was you?

Some tried bribery: "I'll support the Chicago Bulls." Another said today would be your birthday. So happy birthday, whoever you are.

My personal favorite: Somebody wrote and said, "We are super underrated!" [*Laughter*] I'm sure she was talking about this school. But keep in mind, you're not only the number-one university in America younger than 50 years old, you also hold the Guinness World Record for biggest water pistol fight. You're pretty excited about that. [*Laughter*]

"We are super underrated." This young lady could have just as well been talking, though,

about this generation. I think this generation of young people is super underrated.

In your young lives, you've seen dizzying change, from terror attacks to economic turmoil; from Twitter to Tumblr. [*Laughter*] Some of your families have known tough times during the course of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And you're graduating into a still-healing job market, and some of you are carrying student loan debt that you're concerned about. And yet your generation—the most educated, the most diverse, the most tolerant, the most politically independent, and the most digitally fluent in our history—is also on record as being the most optimistic about our future.

And I'm here to tell you that you are right to be optimistic. [*Applause*] You are right to be optimistic. Consider this: Since the time most of you graduated from high school, fewer Americans are at war. More have health insurance. More are graduating from college. Our businesses have added more than 9 million new jobs. The number of states where you're free to marry who you love has more than doubled. [*Applause*] And that's just some of the progress that you've seen while you've been studying here at UC Irvine.

But we do face real challenges: rebuilding the middle class and reversing inequality's rise, reining in college costs, protecting voting rights, welcoming the immigrants and young dreamers who keep this country vibrant, stemming the tide of violence that guns inflict on our schools. We've got some big challenges. And if you're fed a steady diet of cynicism that says nobody's trustworthy and nothing works and there's no way we can actually address these problems, then the temptation is to just go it alone, to look after yourself, and not participate in the larger project of achieving our best vision of America.

And I'm here to tell you, don't believe the cynicism. Guard against it. Don't buy into it. Today I want to use one case study to show you that progress is possible and perseverance is critical. I want to show you how badly we need you—both your individual voices and your collective efforts—to give you the chance you seek to change the world and maybe even save it.

I'm going to talk about one of the most significant long-term challenges that our country and our planet faces: the growing threat of a rapidly changing climate.

Now, this isn't a policy speech. I understand it's a commencement, and I already delivered a long climate address last summer. I remember because it was 95 degrees and my staff had me do it outside, and I was pouring with sweat—as a visual aid. [*Laughter*] And since this is a very educated group, you already know the science. Burning fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide traps heat. Levels of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere are higher than they've been in 800,000 years.

We know the trends. The 18 warmest years on record have all happened since you graduates were born. We know what we see with our own eyes. Out west, firefighters brave longer, harsher wildfire seasons; States have to budget for that. Mountain towns worry about what smaller snowpacks mean for tourism. Farmers and families at the bottom worry about what it will mean for their water. In cities like Norfolk and Miami, streets now flood frequently at high tide. Shrinking icecaps have National Geographic making the biggest change in its atlas since the Soviet Union broke apart.

So the question is not whether we need to act. The overwhelming judgment of science, accumulated and measured and reviewed over decades, has put that question to rest. The question is whether we have the will to act before it's too late. For if we fail to protect the world we leave not just to my children, but to your children and your children's children, we will fail one of our primary reasons for being on this world in the first place. And that is to leave the world a little bit better for the next generation.

Now, the good news is, you already know all this. UC Irvine set up the first Earth System Science Department in America. A UC Irvine professor-student team won the Nobel Prize for discovering that CFCs destroy the ozone layer. A UC Irvine glaciologist's work led to one of last month's reports showing one of the

world's major ice sheets in irreversible retreat. Students and professors are in the field working to predict changing weather patterns, fire seasons, and water tables; working to understand how shifting seasons affect global ecosystems; to get zero-emission vehicles on the road faster; to help coastal communities adapt to rising seas. And when I challenged colleges to reduce their energy use to 20 percent by 2020, UC Irvine went ahead and did it last year. Done. So UC Irvine is ahead of the curve. All of you are ahead of the curve.

Your generation reminds me of something President Wilson once said. He said: "Sometimes, people call me an idealist. Well, that is the way I know I am an American." That's who we are.

And if you need a reason to be optimistic about our future, then look around this stadium. Because today, in America, the largest single age group is 22 years old. And you are going to do great things. And I want you to know that I've got your back, because one of the reasons I ran for this office was because I believed our dangerous addiction to foreign oil left our economy at risk and our planet in peril. So when I took office, we set out to use more clean energy and less dirty energy and waste less energy overall.

And since then, we've doubled the distance our cars will go on a gallon of gas by the middle of the next decade. We've tripled the electricity we harness from the wind, generating enough last year to power every home in California. We've multiplied the electricity we generate from the sun 10 times over. And this State, California, is so far ahead of the rest of the country in solar that earlier this year solar power met 18 percent of your total power demand one day.

The bottom line is, America produces more renewable energy than ever, more natural gas than anyone. And for the first time in nearly two decades, we produce more oil here at home than we buy from other countries. And these advances have created jobs and grown our economy and helped cut our carbon pollution to levels not seen in about 20 years. Since 2006, no country on Earth has reduced its total carbon pollution by as much as the United States of America.

So that's all reason for optimism. Here's the challenge: We've got to do more. What we're doing is not enough. And that's why, a couple weeks ago, America proposed new standards to limit the amount of harmful carbon pollution that power plants can dump into the air. And we also have to realize, as hundreds of scientists declared last month, that climate change is no longer a distant threat, but "has moved firmly into the present." That's a quote. In some parts of the country, weather-related disasters like droughts and fires and storms and floods are going to get harsher, and they're going to get costlier. And that's why today I'm announcing a new $1 billion competitive fund to help communities prepare for the impacts of climate change and build more resilient infrastructure across the country.

So it's a big problem. But progress, no matter how big the problem, is possible. That's important to remember. Because no matter what you do in life, you're going to run up against big problems, in your own personal life and in your communities and in your country. There's going to be a stubborn status quo, and there are going to be people determined to stymie your efforts to bring about change. There are going to be people who say you can't do something. There are going to be people who say you shouldn't bother. I've got some experience in this myself. [*Laughter*]

Now, part of what's unique about climate change, though, is the nature of some of the opposition to action. It's pretty rare that you'll encounter somebody who says the problem you're trying to solve simply doesn't exist. When President Kennedy sets us on a—set us on a course for the Moon, there were a number of people who made a serious case that it wouldn't be worth it; it was going to be too expensive, it was going to be too hard, it would take too long. But nobody ignored the science. I don't remember anybody saying that the Moon wasn't there or that it was made of cheese. [*Laughter*]

Today's Congress, though, is full of folks who stubbornly and automatically reject the scientific

evidence about climate change. They will tell you it is a hoax or a fad. One Member of Congress actually says the world is cooling. There was one Member of Congress who mentioned a theory involving "dinosaur flatulence"—which I won't get into, but—[*laughter*].

Now, their view may be wrong—and a fairly serious threat to everybody's future—but at least they have the brass to say what they actually think. There are some who also duck the question. They say—when they're asked about climate change, they say, "Hey, look, I'm not a scientist." And I'll translate that for you. What that really means is, "I know that manmade climate change really is happening, but if I admit it, I'll be run out of town by a radical fringe that thinks climate science is a liberal plot, so I'm not going to admit it."

Now, I'm not a scientist either—[*laughter*]—but we've got some really good ones at NASA. I do know that the overwhelming majority of scientists who work on climate change, including some who once disputed the data, have put that debate to rest. The writer Thomas Friedman recently put it to me this way. We were talking, and he says, "Your kid is sick, you consult 100 doctors; 97 of them tell you to do this, 3 tell [you] to do that, and you want to go with the 3?"

The fact is, this should not be a partisan issue. After all, it was Republicans who used to lead the way on new ideas to protect our environment. It was Teddy Roosevelt who first pushed for our magnificent national parks. It was Richard Nixon who signed the Clean Air Act and opened the EPA. George H.W. Bush—a wonderful man who at 90 just jumped out of a plane with—in a parachute—[*laughter*]—said that "human activities are changing the atmosphere in unexpected and unprecedented ways." John McCain and other Republicans publicly supported free-market-based cap-and-trade bills to slow carbon pollution just a few years ago, before the Tea Party decided it was a massive threat to freedom and liberty.

These days, unfortunately, nothing is happening. Even minor energy efficiency bills are killed on the Senate floor. And the reason is because people are thinking about politics instead of thinking about what's good for the next generation. What's the point of public office if you're not going to use your power to help solve problems?

And part of the challenge is that the media doesn't spend a lot of time covering climate change and letting average Americans know how it could impact their futures. Now, the broadcast networks' nightly newscasts spend just a few minutes a month covering climate issues. On cable, the debate is usually between political pundits, not scientists. When we introduced those new antipollution standards a couple weeks ago, the instant reaction from Washington's political press wasn't about what it would mean for our planet; it was what would it mean for an election 6 months from now. And that kind of misses the point. Of course, they're not scientists either.

And I want to tell you all this not to discourage you, I'm telling you all this because I want to light a fire under you. As the generation getting shortchanged by inaction on this issue, I want all of you to understand you cannot accept that this is the way it has to be.

The climate change deniers suggest there's still a debate over the science. There is not. The talking heads on cable news suggest public opinion is hopelessly deadlocked. It is not. Seven in ten Americans say global warming is a serious problem. Seven in ten say the Federal Government should limit pollution from our power plants. And of all the issues in a recent poll asking Americans where we think we can make a difference, protecting the environment came out on top.

So we've got public opinion potentially on our side. We can do this. We can make a difference. You can make a difference. And the sooner you do, the better, not just for our climate, but for our economy. The reason—there's a reason that more than 700 businesses like Apple and Microsoft and GM and Nike, Intel, Starbucks have declared that "tackling climate change is one of America's greatest economic opportunities in the 21st century." The country that seizes this opportunity first will lead the way. A low-carbon, clean energy

economy can be an engine for growth and jobs for decades to come, and I want America to build that engine. Because if we do, others will follow. I want those jobs, I want those opportunities, I want those businesses right here in the United States of America.

Developing countries are using more and more energy, and tens of millions of people are entering the global middle class, and they want to buy cars and refrigerators and—so if we don't deal with this problem soon, we're going to be overwhelmed. These nations have some of the fastest rising levels of carbon pollution. They're going to have to take action to meet this challenge. They're more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than we are. They've got even more to lose. But they're waiting to see what does America do. That's what the world does. It waits to watch us act. And when we do, they move. And I'm convinced that on this issue, when America proves what's possible, then they're going to join us.

And America cannot meet this threat alone. Of course, the world cannot meet it without America. This is a fight that America must lead. So I'm going to keep doing my part for as long as I hold this office and as long as I'm a citizen once out of office. But we're going to need you, the next generation, to finish the job.

We need scientists to design new fuels. We need farmers to help grow them. We need engineers to invent new technologies. We need entrepreneurs to sell those technologies. We need workers to operate assembly lines that hum with high-tech, zero-carbon components. We need builders to hammer into place the foundations for a clean energy age. We need diplomats and business men and women and Peace Corps volunteers to help developing nations skip past the dirty phase of development and transition to sustainable sources of energy.

In other words, we need you. We need you. And if you believe, like I do, that something has to be done on this, then you're going to have to speak out. You're going to have to learn more about these issues. You're going to have to—even if you're not like Jessica and an expert, you're going to have to—you're going to have to work on this. You're going to have to push those of us in power to do what this American moment demands. You've got to educate your classmates and colleagues and family members and fellow citizens and tell them what's at stake. And you've got to push back against the misinformation and speak out for facts and organize others around your vision for the future.

You need to invest in what helps and divest from what harms. And you've got to remind everyone who represents you, at every level of government, that doing something about climate change is a prerequisite for your vote.

It's no accident that when President Kennedy needed to convince the Nation that sending Americans into space was a worthy goal, he went to a university. That's where he started. Because a challenge as big as that, as costly as that, as difficult as that, requires a spirit of youth. It requires a spirit of adventure, a willingness to take risks. It requires optimism. It requires hope. That day, a man told us we'd go to the Moon within a decade. And despite all the naysayers, somehow, we knew as a nation that we'd build a spaceship and we'd meet that goal.

That's because we're Americans, and that's what we do. Even when our political system is consumed by small things, we are a people called to do big things. And progress on climate change is a big thing. Progress won't always be flashy; it will be measured in disasters averted and lives saved and a planet preserved and days just like this one, 20 years from now and 50 years from now and 100 years from now. But can you imagine a more worthy goal, a more worthy legacy, than protecting the world we leave to our children?

So I ask your generation to help leave us that legacy. I ask you to believe in yourselves and in one another, and above all, when life gets you down or somebody tells you you can't do something, to believe in something better.

There are people here who know what it means to dream. When Mohamad Abedi was a boy, the suffering he saw in refugee camps in Lebanon didn't drive him into despair, it inspired him to become a doctor. And when he came to America, he discovered a passion for

engineering. So here, at UC Irvine, he became a biomedical engineer to study the human brain. And Mohamad said, I had never come to the United States—"had I never come to the United States, I would have never had the ability to do the work that I'm doing." He's now going to Caltech to keep doing that work.

Cinthia Flores is the daughter of a single mom who worked as a seamstress and a housekeeper. The first in her family to graduate from high school. The first in her family to graduate from college. And in college, she says, "I learned about myself that I was good at advocating for others and that I was argumentative—so maybe I should go to law school." And today Cinthia is the first in her family to graduate from law school. And she plans to advocate for the rights of workers like her mom. She says, "I have the great privilege and opportunity to answer the call of my community." "The bottom line," she says, "is being of service."

On 9/11, Aaron Anderson was a sophomore in college. Several months later, he was in training for Army Special Forces. He fought in Afghanistan, and on February 28, 2006, he was nearly killed by an IED. He endured dozens of surgeries to save his legs, months of recovery at Walter Reed. When he couldn't physically return to Active Duty, he devoted his time to his brothers-in-arms, starting two businesses with fellow veterans and a foundation to help fellow wounded Green Beret soldiers. And then he went back to school. And last December, he graduated summa cum laude from UC Irvine. And Aaron is here today, along with four soon-to-be-commissioned ROTC cadets and 65 other graduating veterans. And I would ask them to stand and be recognized for their service.

The point is, you know how to dream. And you know how to work for your dreams. And yes, sometimes, you may be "super underrated." [*Laughter*] But usually, it's the underrated, the underdogs, the dreamers, the idealists, the fighters, the argumentative—those are the folks who do the biggest things.

And this generation—this 9/11 generation of soldiers, this new generation of scientists and advocates and entrepreneurs and altruists—you're the antidote to cynicism. It doesn't mean you're not going to get down sometimes. You will. You'll know disillusionment. You'll experience doubt. People will disappoint you by their actions. But that can't discourage you.

Cynicism has never won a war or cured a disease or started a business or fed a young mind or sent men into space. Cynicism is a choice. Hope is a better choice.

Hope is what gave young soldiers the courage to storm a beach and liberate people they never met. Hope is what gave young students the strength to sit in and stand up and march for women's rights and civil rights and voting rights and gay rights and immigration rights.

Hope is the belief, against all evidence to the contrary, that there are better days ahead and that together we can build up a middle class and reshape our immigration system and shield our children from gun violence and shelter future generations from the ravages of climate change.

Hope is the fact that, today, the single largest age group in America is 22-year-olds who are all just itching to reshape this country and reshape the world. And I cannot wait to see what you do tomorrow.

Congratulations. Thank you, class of 2014. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in Angel Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Janet A. Napolitano, president, University of California system; Michael V. Drake, chancellor, Jessica Pratt, commencement speaker and doctoral graduate in ecology and evolutionary biology, and Eric Rignot, professor of earth system science, University of California, Irvine; Personal Secretary to the President Ferial Govashiri; Michael N. Trout, center fielder, Major League Baseball's Los Angeles Angels; Rep. Dana T. Rohrabacher; Thomas L. Friedman, columnist, New York Times; and Esperanza Monterrosa, mother of 2014 University of California, Irvine School of Law graduate Cinthia Flores.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to Iraq
June 16, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Starting on June 15, 2014, up to approximately 275 U.S. Armed Forces personnel are deploying to Iraq to provide support and security for U.S. personnel and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. This force is deploying for the purpose of protecting U.S. citizens and property, if necessary, and is equipped for combat. This force will remain in Iraq until the security situation becomes such that it is no longer needed.

This action has been directed consistent with my responsibility to protect U.S. citizens both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at TechShop Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
June 17, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. It is great to be in TechShop. And I am so thankful to all of you for taking the time to hang out with me a little bit.

We are here mostly to highlight the incredible work that is not only being done by a lot of people in this room, but the incredible opportunities we have to continue to advance manufacturing all across America. But before we do that, with the press here, I just want to make a quick comment on some news of the day that some of you may have heard.

Capture of Ahmed Abu Khattala by U.S. Special Forces and Federal Bureau of Investigation Personnel in Benghazi, Libya

We are all aware of the tragedy that happened in Benghazi, where four Americans, including our Ambassador there, Chris Stevens, was killed in an attack on a consulate office there. I said at the time that my absolute commitment was to make sure that we brought to justice those who had been responsible.

And yesterday our Special Forces, showing incredible courage and precision, were able to capture an individual, Abu Khattala, who was—is alleged to have been one of the masterminds of the attack. And he is now being transported back to the United States. I say that, first of all, because we continue to think about and pray for the families of those who were killed during that terrible attack. But more importantly, I—it's important for us to send a message to the world that when Americans are attacked, no matter how long it takes, we will find those responsible, and we will bring them to justice. And that's a message I sent the day after it happened. And regardless of how long it takes, we will find you.

And I want to make sure that everybody around the world hears that message very clearly, because my first and most solemn duty as President and Commander in Chief is to keep the American people safe. And there are

a lot of dangers out there and a lot of challenges, and our diplomats serve with incredible courage and valor in some very difficult situations. They need to know that this country has their back and will always go after anybody who goes after us.

Manufacturing Industry/Research and Development

Now, with that in mind, let me get to the point of this gathering here today. I want to thank Mark and Jim for the great work that they've done in helping to set up TechShop. And the reason we wanted to come out here was, we've made enormous progress over the last several years in revitalizing American manufacturing. There was a time when people felt as if no matter what we did, that companies were going to be moving overseas and jobs were going to be moving overseas and American manufacturing's days was—were behind us.

And yet what we've seen over the last several years is American manufacturing come roaring back. We've got at this point 620,000 manufacturing jobs that have been created over the last several years, the most since the 1990s. We actually have companies now saying that America is the number-one place to do business again, something that we haven't seen in over 12 years. And companies, instead of outsourcing, are now thinking about insourcing once again. We have seen entrepreneurship in manufacturing expand at the fastest pace that we've seen in 20 years.

And so people are starting to realize, number one, America is a great place to do business; number two, manufacturing is critical to the health of our economy overall. When we make stuff in America, then R&D is done here. The jobs in manufacturing typically pay better than jobs in other parts of the economy. There are ripple effects. If you make a product here, that means you're hiring not just engineers, not just guys on the assembly line or gals on the assembly line, you're also getting suppliers and advertisers, and there's just a whole set of positive spinoffs that come out of manufacturing.

And part of what's exciting is that, traditionally, manufacturing was viewed—and we're in a steel town here in Pittsburgh—that manufacturing meant big factories, all kinds of smoke and fire, and a lot of heavy capital. But because of advances in technology, part of the opportunity is now to make the tools that are needed for production and prototypes are now democratized. They're in the hands of anybody who's got a good idea.

And what we've been trying to do is to encourage more and more entrepreneurs, inventors to not just take root here, but also have access to the kinds of equipment and technology—whether it's 3–D printers or laser cutters—that allow them to design their own ideas, create prototypes, put them out to market, test them, tinker with them, refine them, and ultimately create brand new businesses.

And nobody has done a better job or is a better example of this new trend than what's being done here at TechShop. For the price of a gym membership, people can become members of TechShop, they're able to have access to a bunch of cutting-edge technology, and folks are able to create products, ideas that in some cases, they're just doing as a hobby or for pleasure, but in some cases, actually lead to businesses that end up thriving.

Probably the best example is the Square, the little gizmo that people are putting into smartphones and are used to—are using for payment purposes and be able to swipe a credit card. Now a $5 billion business; prototype was designed at a TechShop.

I have another example that's near and dear to my heart because I actually own one—it's a DODOcase. Somebody have my DODOcase around here? Let's bring out my DODOcase. [*Laughter*] This is—first of all, this is a great product. I love DODO. See, this is my iPad case. That's a picture of Malia and Sasha; they're on there. And me giving them a hug. [*Laughter*] I love this case, and the first prototype was made at a TechShop. And now you've got a whole bunch of people who've got a business and who are employed there, and they're manufacturing and selling all across the country.

So we have the opportunity to grow ideas here in the United States, create businesses, create opportunities. And all of this is happen-

ing in part because State, local, and Federal governments are also taking an interest in how can we promote manufacturing more effectively. And we've got some people here who have done a great job doing that. You've got your own mayor, Bill Peduto, the mayor of Pittsburgh, who's here. We've got County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, who's here as well. And we've got one of your outstanding Senators, Bob Casey, who's here as well.

All these guys are great champions for what we're trying to do. And a lot of my agenda for economic development in the next couple of years revolves around how do we spur more manufacturing, more homegrown ideas, more research and development. Already, we've been able to get 80 cities to commit to working in a public-private partnership to generate more manufacturing efforts in their respective cities. We've created four high-tech advanced manufacturing hubs, and we have budgeted to create a whole lot more around the country. And some of it has to do with advanced materials, some of it has to do with 3–D printing. The idea is, we start building an ecosystem, a network of companies, universities, researchers, entrepreneurs, all of whom start really focusing and becoming experts on a particular facet of industries of the future.

That's how we're going to build more and more niches that allow us to dominate the market and sell more products made in America, not just here in the United States, but overseas.

So we've got a lot of possibilities, but we're going to have to continue to make some important investments. And I'm here to tell you that as long as I'm President, at least, one of my top priorities is going to be to continue to build up manufacturing, because I want to make sure that if you work hard in this country, if you've got a good idea, if you're willing to put in some sweat equity, that you can make it here in America and live out your American Dream.

Because when we have an economy that works not just from the top down, but from the bottom up, and everybody has got a stake and everybody is doing well, everybody is pulling in the same direction, that's when our economy grows best. Our economy does not grow as well when the—it just works for a few at the very top and ordinary workers or small-businesspeople get squeezed. And I think this is an enormous opportunity for us to take advantage of.

So that's what I wanted to say at the top. Now what I want to do is just hear from you: questions, comments, ideas. We've got about 45 minutes. I'll try to keep my answers short if your questions are short. [*Laughter*]

And I'm going to start off with Mark.

Thanks.

White House Maker Faire

TechShop Chief Executive Officer and Cofounder Mark Hatch. Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to host you here. First, as a former Green Beret, thank you for going and getting that guy and letting our folks do their job.

The President. Absolutely.

Mr. Hatch. It's a big deal. You're hosting the White House Maker Faire tomorrow, and so I want to bridge the advanced manufacturing to makers. I'm just curious, kind of, now that you've been through this space and you've heard some of the stories, how do you see the maker movement playing into your objective of helping manufacturing in the U.S.?

The President. It's a great question. Tomorrow I'm going to be hosting the first White House Maker Faire. And for those of you who are less familiar, there is an entire movement across the country of people who are recognizing that with new technology, that the tinkerers, the people who are working in their garage who are coming up with an idea, that the barriers to entry, the capital they'd have to put in to work up those ideas are now drastically reduced.

So what we decided was, let's invite a whole bunch of folks who've come up with wonderful stuff, some products that they're selling, some that they've made for themselves—students, entrepreneurs, established business leaders—let's bring them to the White House so that they can share ideas and network a little bit and so that we can highlight some of the

tremendous work that's already being done out there.

And part of my goal has been to use the power of the Presidency to highlight some great stuff that's already going on out throughout the country. We've now had several science fairs, because I'm trying to encourage young people to look at science, math, technology, engineering as a critical profession if we're going to maintain our innovative edge in this global economy. The Makers Faire is the next iteration of that.

In order for us to stay ahead when it comes to innovation—and we remain the most innovative economy in the world by far—we've got to have basic research, we've got to have skills like math and science and engineering that are developed, but we also have to provide platforms for people once they have these ideas to go out there and actually make stuff. And so the Maker Faire is an extension of this broader effort that we've been trying to make, including significant investments.

We've seen an increase in Federal funding of basic research around manufacturing—for example, we've boosted by about 30 percent—because we want more people to remember what it is that made us an economic superpower in the first place. It wasn't just the financial sector and a lot of the parts of the economy that have become dominant today, it was folks like Thomas Edison. It was the guys at HP in their garage coming up with new ideas, willing to take risks, willing to experiment.

In the past, that kind of innovation and entrepreneurship has been a driver of our economy, but there are a lot of people with good ideas who have had difficulty getting started because getting the equipment they needed in order to get started was often cost prohibitive. Technology allows us to lower those costs. Now we've got to make sure that we are taking advantage of these new opportunities.

So who else? Don't be shy. This looks like a pretty knowledgeable group here. Yes, what's your name? Introduce yourself before you ask a question.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education/Vocational and Technical Training

Q. Thank you. Thanassis Rikakis, vice provost for design, arts, and technology at Carnegie Mellon. Welcome to Pittsburgh; great to have you here to announce these important things. I have an educational question for you. All the maker paradigms that you're mentioning, because they accommodate many different learning styles, they also have the ability to enhance and diversify the STEM pipeline. How do you think we can go about increasing the access to learning through making in the K-through-12 pipeline and especially in underserved areas?

The President. It is a great question. And this is not a plant. [*Laughter*] But the—part of what I'm working with Arne Duncan, our Secretary of Education, on is how do we start reforming and reimagining how the K-through-12 process works, but particularly high school.

There are basic skills that our kids need. They need to write, they need to read, they need basic numeracy. But too often, what happens in high school is kids are just sitting in a classroom and they're being lectured to. Now, there are great teachers out there, and in some cases, a subject like organic chemistry, you just need to focus, you need to hit the books, and there aren't a lot of shortcuts. But young people have different learning styles. And not everybody is going to necessarily go to a 4-year college or university. Not everybody is going to be interested in French literature. There are some folks who, they just want to—they're going to learn by doing.

And so what we have been trying to encourage is, are there ways for us to introduce apprenticeships, models for high school in which kids are working at the same time as they're going to school? So if you want to be a graphic designer, you've still got to take the basic classes, but are there ways of designing those classes around you also working with a graphic designer who is already on the job and you can get a concrete sense of what's possible?

I did—I do usually three commencements a year. One is a high school commencement. I

just did a commencement at Worcester Tech in—right outside of Boston, and the principal there is amazing, young woman; she was voted the National Principal of the Year. But they have boosted their math scores by 100 percent, their reading scores by 200 percent. And they have in house, in the university, by partnering with businesses, they've got a veterinary clinic; they've got a car detailing shop; they've got a computer design program. And so kids actually participate and are running businesses even as they are learning.

And that kinds of hands-on approach oftentimes is going to be a lot more effective and a lot more relevant to these young people. A whole bunch of them are going to go on to community colleges. Some of them are going to go 4-year universities. Some of them may work for a while, for 5 years, and then, once they have a better sense of the skills they need in the occupation that they're interested in, they'll go back to school. But giving kids a bunch of different pathways to suit their learning styles and their interests, I think, is going to end up producing better outcomes.

One last point I'll say just in terms of STEM education: We're also trying to really focus on not only how do we get best practices spread among teachers to teach math and science so that it's not just classroom learning and kids are less intimidated. We're really focusing on girls and minority students, who are often underrepresented in STEM education. And that's been a major focus of our education reform efforts. Okay?

Yes. Do we have a mike up here? Here we go.

Women in the Workplace/Work-Life Balance Concerns/Workplace Flexibility Policies

Q. On a similar note—my name is Ashley Cecil.

The President. What's—good to see you, Ashley.

Q. And I am a painter, and I print my fabric—or my paintings on fabric, and I use the TechShop here to sew that into textile products. And I'm also a new mom; I have an 8-month-old at home. And I'm curious, in your experience, are you finding that entrepreneurs, people that are members of the TechShop across the country, are you finding that this is becoming more conducive for women and for mothers? Because it's very hard for me to juggle childcare, and I find that oftentimes men frequently don't struggle as much as I do with kind of balancing both of that. I'm hoping that it's changing in our favor. And I know that you had mentioned that you hope that you're finding more girls are becoming interested in this as a career path, but it's certainly—I'm 1 of out of every 10 that's here in the TechShop. But I hope that maybe you're finding that's changing?

The President. Well, I will tell you that the challenges of women in the workplace exist whether you're an entrepreneur or you are taking a more conventional route, which is part of the reason why next week we'll be having an all-day summit on working families. And part of our focus here is how do we make sure that families in general, but women in particular, are able to achieve and succeed in the marketplace without being penalized for also doing their most important job, which is making sure that our kids turn out well.

And that means equal pay for equal work. That means increasing the minimum wage, because women are disproportionately represented in low-income occupations. It means making sure that we've got a credible childcare network. We probably have as bad a childcare safety net as any developed country, and we could—we need to be doing a lot better on that front.

And so the interesting thing is, what we're finding is a lot of companies are realizing that family-friendly policies end up being good business, not just the right thing to do. People are more productive. Michelle talks about how, when she worked at the University of Chicago Hospital, her first interview, she actually brought Sasha into the meeting with the CEO. She just wanted to kind of see, all right, how is he going to respond? Sasha was still in the bassinet, the car seat thing. Because her point to her employer was: This is who I am. I think I can do a really good job, but it means that if I have to take her to a pediatrician, I don't want

to have to argue about whether or not I can do that. And if you are supportive of my efforts with my family, then you're going to get 110 percent out of me, but you've got to have some flexibility in terms of time and so forth.

A lot of employers, I think, are starting to realize that. It's harder for smaller businesses, because if you've only got four or five employees, sometimes, trying to figure out how to build in that flexibility may be more challenging. And that's where Federal policies, tax policies, childcare policies—that can make a difference. It's not just to help the individual. It's also to help the small business who may not have the resources that a Google or a Ford Motor Company might have in terms of creating a more family-friendly workplace.

But this is an area that we're going to have to spend more time on. And by the way, I just want to emphasize this: This is not a women's issue, this is a family issue. Women now bring in close to half of all income, and there are a whole lot of families out there where the woman is the primary breadwinner. And if Michelle is not being paid fairly, then that's not helping me. I want her to get what she rightfully deserves. I want her being paid the same as a man doing the same job, because that is helping our family.

I will say, the First Lady is kind of a bad example, because the First Lady doesn't get paid. And she works pretty hard. Obviously, we're okay. So—[*laughter*].

But the truth is, this is a family issue. And also, by the way, more men, fathers—we just had Father's Day a couple of days ago—more men want to be involved in their kids' childhood as well. And so flexibility, family leave—those are all policies that are critically important to all of us. All right?

Yes.

Sexual Assault Prevention Efforts

Q. Hi, Mr. President. My name is Jayon Wang. I was a Sidwell Friends grad in 2009 and a Carnegie Mellon engineer, and now I lead our efforts at Lifeshel, a Pittsburgh startup that aims to use smartphone cases to prevent sexual assault.

The President. That's excellent. And it's good to know that Sidwell graduates are doing something with their life.

Q. Absolutely.

The President. My kids go to Sidwell, so I want to—[*laughter*]—that's good to know.

Q. Absolutely. So my question surrounds the various efforts at the White House and all the task forces that are being implemented: What can young startups do to aid the White House in its task forces, and also, how can we participate in these movements and make sure that our efforts are best utilized?

The President. Well, we'd love to find out what you're thinking about in terms of using technology more effectively. Obviously, the issue of sexual assault is something that all of us should be alarmed by. I think you've seen an increase in awareness, some increase in reporting, but it is still way too pervasive. And recently, we have been taking on not only sexual assault on college campuses, but also in our military, where, as Commander in Chief, I've said to our top brass, you will be measured in part—your performance—in how well you do in changing a culture here in which sexual assault is still way too common.

So we've got an ongoing taskforce. What we'll do is get in contact with you and find out the kind of work that you're doing. I'm assuming, if you're talking about smartphones, part of the tool here is the ability for people to alert, using a smartphone, friends, family, law enforcement quickly if they find themselves in a tough situation. And they can press a button, and they don't have to be fumbling around and dialing, which I think is a great idea, and let's see if we can highlight it and find out more about it.

I'd love, by the way, my team, have we've got my tea somewhere? I've got a cup of tea. I know it's out there somewhere. Have somebody bring it up for me.

Yes, right there.

Unemployed Older Workers/Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act/Student Loan Debt

Q. Hello, Mr. President. I'm Jean Frye. I'm originally from Detroit; I'm living in Pittsburgh

and have been here for 30 years. So you obviously know the history of manufacturing and its demise and whatever, and I understand the situation with families and such. I have a little bit of a unique situation. I'm going to be 60 in February, and I'm—have been a stay-at-home mom and now going through a divorce. I've been placed in a job through TechShop, or through the MAKERSHiP program, and I've very grateful for that. I'm just kind of wondering what's going to happen in my life, getting kind of a late start in the workforce again, as far as, am I ever going to be able to retire, things like that.

The President. Well, there are a couple of questions involved there. First of all, I don't want to sugarcoat it. It is tougher to lose your job when you're in your fifties or early sixties, because employers oftentimes—it may be unspoken, and they may not even be conscious of the bias—oftentimes, they're thinking, let me hire the 20-something or 30-something-year-old; if I'm going to make an investment in them, then they'll be potentially working for a long time.

One thing that has helped, by the way, is the Affordable Care Act, because in the past, a lot of employers thought to themselves, if I have an older worker, that means that I may have higher health care costs. We have seen over the last 3 years the slowest increase in health care costs in 50 years. For small employers, oftentimes, their employees may be able to get health care through the Affordable Care Act, where the employee—employer him or herself can't provide health care. So that's helped.

So I would argue that oftentimes, older workers are the best workers. They've got experience. They know how to work with others. They are—they've gone through a lot of the things that younger workers have to go through to settle down a little bit. I won't mention specifics, but they're less likely to go out late at night after work, for example.

So in terms of reliability, skill, conscientiousness, I think that older workers are a great investment, particularly because people are healthier now and they're living longer and they're taking care of themselves more.

But older workers who lose their jobs have to recognize that they are probably going to have to adapt and retool in order to get an opportunity. If you lose your job at 55, you may not be able to be in the same industry that you were in before. And you may have to spend a little bit of time at school. You may have to make a pitch to an employer: Give me a chance for a short time, and let me show you what I can do. It's not always fair, but that may be what's required.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—I went to school too, and now at my age, I'm straddled with $30,000 in student debt in a field that I couldn't get a job in too. So I mean, there's that added to the problem too.

The President. Right. Look, the whole issue of student debt is something that all of us have to address in a serious way, and we're spending a lot of time focusing on universities that—and colleges to keep their costs down. And we've got legislation that got voted down by Republicans in Congress most recently to allow people to refinance their student debt. That's got to be a priority as well.

But the good news is that the economy now has produced more than 9 million jobs over the last 4½ years. And so although the economy is still healing, generally the employment outlook now is better than it's been since the great recession, since I came into office. That then means that, as there are more job openings, it's a little bit more of a—applicants are going to have a little more leverage in terms of possibly getting hired, and that means that some folks who had been discouraged from getting into the workplace over the last several years are going to start finding that their skills are a little more appreciated than they were in the past. Okay?

Yes.

Labor Unions/Entrepreneurship/Small-Business Promotion Efforts

Q. Hi, Mr. President. My name is John Naples. I'm a journeyman, union sheet metal worker, and I take part at the MAKERSHiP project here at TechShop, which helps people develop skills to place them in solid middle

class jobs. And I run a volunteer welding focus group on Thursdays. Anyway, my ultimate goal is to start my own business, and I'd prefer to use organized labor because I know the level of our training and the pride that we take in our work. And I want to know how you think becoming a union contractor and using union labor can help an upstart business or an entrepreneur be successful. And how can we make it easier for people like me to make the transition from union worker to business owner?

The President. Well, look, Pittsburgh historically has been a union town. America was built by workers who, over time, through a lot of struggle, got the right to bargain collectively. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that our middle class was built in part because unions were able to negotiate weekends and overtime and benefits, things that now nonunion workers take for granted. Well, you got those because unions were out there fighting for you for a very long time.

Now, it's no secret that unions have been back on their heels a little bit over the last several decades. Part of that has to do with the globalization of the economy. Companies say to themselves, well, we can move anywhere. Now that supply chains are dictated more by technology, the costs of transportation have dropped. And that has given unions less leverage. And so only a small percentage of private sector jobs now are unionized.

I would continue to argue that we should do everything we can to strengthen unions in this country. Unions have to be flexible. Unions have to recognize that if you're working for a company, that that company has to have a bottom line; they're competing against nonunion labor as well. The good news, though, is that typically, union workers know how to do the job. And so what you can—what you may lose incrementally because you're paying slightly higher wages or higher benefits, you're gaining in skills, reliability, productivity. And if you can create a culture where employers and workers feel both invested, those are the companies that succeed over time and can thrive.

Now, if you're an entrepreneur, if you're starting off and you're a skilled tradesman, I think the challenges, in terms of that transition, are the same as for everybody who wants to start a business. Typically, the issue is, can you get capital to start it up, are you able to market what you do in a way that gets you customers, are you able to run your business efficiently enough that you actually get in the black at some point, are you willing to put in a whole lot of extra hours, because if you're used to getting paid overtime, but you now own the business, it doesn't really matter if you're paying yourself overtime because it's coming out of your pocket anyway.

And so sometimes, that transition, I think, is going to be tough. But I don't think the transition is going to be any tougher for somebody coming out of a trade as anybody who's starting a business. It's hard starting a small business, and the majority of small business startups fail. The interesting thing is, the United States remains the place where people are most willing to try and start something up and take those risks, and part of what we should be doing is encouraging that culture.

When it comes to small businesses, for example, they were the hardest hit during the recession. What we did was we significantly increased the amount of small business loans that we were willing to give, and we cut down some of the redtape to help people access that financing more quickly. We cut taxes about 18 times for small businesses to incentivize them to hire new workers or invest in new plants and equipment.

And I'm constantly looking for ways that we can encourage small business formation. But having said all that, if you're the guy who is actually starting something up, it doesn't matter whether it's a restaurant, you're trying to become a contractor, or you're trying to start a high-tech manufacturing firm. You're going to be putting a lot of hours, and your odds of success are still going to be challenging. On the other hand, that's what America is all about, taking some risks.

Okay? Good luck.

Yes.

Research and Development

Q. Thank you for taking my question. My name is Gordon Kirkwood, and I'm working out of TechShop here with a small startup called Whimsy Engineering. I've previously been in graduate school and engineering and not felt the access that we have with places like TechShop here to operate cutting-edge equipment to cut metal, to cut plastics, to do really sophisticated things, machines that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

And so personally, I found this to be a great enabler. But I'm thinking about what could facilitate this sort of enabling for people in other cities. And I can only imagine an incredible revival in American manufacturing and invention if more people had access to this sort of cheap—I mean, for the cost of a smartphone or a gym membership, to be able to have access to lasers that will cut—or water jets that will cut through plate steel and welding and making anything.

So in the context of other costs that other cities incur, like roads, for instance—and I understand that for a mile of highway road—or for a city road, it's a couple hundred thousand dollars for a mile of city road according to our guy here. And highway construction, I understand, sometimes, it's up to a million or two for a mile. When you start looking in terms of that cost, I wonder if we can promote this sort of access to take those risks at lower risk to your pocket better by promoting these in more cities and things like that.

The President. Well, look, the—one of the things that we're already doing as part of our overall effort is to find ways that we can make the resources of the Federal Government more available to the general public.

So, for example, the Department of Energy, which has some cutting-edge technology and laboratories, if in fact they are not being utilized a hundred percent, are there ways in which, in a controlled way, we can give more access to these assets for companies that are trying to start something up?

One of the things that we're looking at is NASA, which has incredible equipment. Are they able to work with companies in their areas so that there may be certain hours or certain periods of time where folks with proper training are able to use some of these assets?

I mean, in some ways, part of what technology has enabled is the same thing that's driving something like Uber or Airbnb, this concept of share economy. Well, the Federal Government has a lot of assets. Can we figure out ways in which, when those assets are being underutilized, somebody who might be able to utilize them could use them? And so I think we're thinking more creatively about that.

Another example is, the Federal Government possesses incredible amounts of data. And one of the things that we've been doing a lot with the high-tech community is thinking about, with proper restrictions to protect privacy and so forth, are there ways for us to generate some of this big data that then ends up being the platform by which we can come up with applications on a smartphone?

Essentially, all the weather apps that you have on your phone are all based on data that the Government collected—the National Weather Service and—which is why, by the way, when there's a Government shutdown, people should remember the Government does a lot of things you just don't notice and that a lot of businesses rely on.

And—but there are a whole host of other bits of data that are embedded. Google Maps, in part, started with the fact that there's a whole bunch of maps out there that are already part of the public record, and data has already been collected. And if you can make that accessible, that then suddenly becomes an opportunity for somebody creatively to look at that data in new ways and come up with new ways of creating useful services or products.

So this is an area, I think, that we're going to continue to explore. Obviously, we've got to—I can't have—I can't rent out the space shuttle to you, or whatever. [*Laughter*] I mean, there's going to be some particle collider that's worth a billion dollars I don't want you messing around with. [*Laughter*] I want physicists in there doing the work. But what we know is, is that there are areas where we can in fact

enhance what's already being done by companies like TechShop.

Universities, by the way, are in the same situation. Universities have a lot of access—or generally have the capital to make large investments, particularly big research universities. Obviously, their first and primary mission is to educate. But the more we can encourage partnerships with universities and local businesses, the possibilities of collaboration and economies of scale, the possibilities of us saving money and creating more entrepreneurship opportunities are going to grow.

And look, a city—you mentioned earlier about moving from Detroit to Pittsburgh. If you think about the contrast between Pittsburgh and Detroit—and there are obviously a lot of reasons why some cities were able to bounce back when manufacturing started taking a beating—part of it was, Pittsburgh had these incredible anchor universities that created a—the ability to diversify their economies—your economy in a way that was a little tougher for Detroit to do.

But every city that is succeeding today in this global marketplace has to have some mechanism where the private sector is collaborating with the public sector, with universities, because nobody can do it alone. Okay?

Yes, right there. Right in front of you. Yes.

President's Relationship With His Daughters/Promoting Creativity and Adaptability in the Digital Age

Q. Hi. I'm Anne Lopez, and I'm the founder and CEO of a company called Romeo Delivers.

The President. I'm sorry, what's it called?

Q. Romeo Delivers.

The President. Romeo Delivers. Tell me about Romeo Delivers.

Q. So we're on a mission to help strengthen relationships.

The President. Oh, I see. Okay. [*Laughter*] So what exactly is Romeo delivering? [*Laughter*]

Q. It's G-rated.

The President. That's all right. Well, this is a family-friendly show. [*Laughter*]

Q. It is. We're a family-friendly business as well. And we just really believe that there are ways that couples can be communicating and interacting in a more fun and romantic way that, I think because of the digital age, that we think texting and things doesn't really replace that physical interaction and, like, writing notes to each other and doing things like that.

So we design and manufacture products that inspire that.

The President. Right.

Q. And I would love to ask you for some examples of things that you have found that are important in your relationship, and that maybe you do, as an example, for your kids that really show that you're caring, because you're traveling so much and you're a great example of someone who's busy.

The President. Yes, yes. Without getting too personal—[*laughter*]—I will say this, that some of this is generational, but I do find that Malia and Sasha's generation, they're so—they live so much on their phones, that it's harder for them to create, maintain keepsakes and objects that show attachment, relationships, et cetera. So I think it's a great idea.

Now, to her credit, Malia, for example, wrote me a letter for Father's Day, which obviously was a lot more important to me than if she had just texted a little emoji or whatever those things are. [*Laughter*] And I'm a big believer in our kids making stuff, and the—and when I think about the gifts that have been most precious to me and the things that I think have been most precious to them, it's something that I did as opposed to something that I bought.

So I probably could have used your service; you could have given me some even better ideas. My craftsmanship has not always been excellent. But I do think that part of what is interesting in this moment in our economy is also what's scary about it. Very few people are going to live and work in one company for 30 years. That model doesn't exist. There's just too much disruption, because technology moves too quickly and globalization moves too quickly.

And so the skill sets that we want to pass on to our kids are the basics, the foundations, right? Communications, numeracy, things like that. But it's also the ability to create, to adapt; to get an idea, execute that idea. And what's exciting is, is that people have more tools than they ever had in their hands to do that. That's true whether it's manufacturing, that's true whether it's managing relationships, that's true whether you want to start a business.

So individuals have been empowered. That's a exciting moment because it gives us an opportunity to tap into more creativity than ever before. The flipside of it is that you are going to have to adapt and retool and get new skills and be able to understand new technologies much more rapidly than the previous generation did. And so there's that adaptability that has to be built into everything we do, and we have to be able to pass that on to our kids.

But I'll look up on your website. I'll see if I can get some new ideas for Michelle. [*Laughter*] Thanks.

Last question. Gentleman right here. Go ahead.

Public Libraries

Q. Thank you. Good afternoon, sir. My name is Larry Lesniak, and I have a small family business. We do highly specialized woodworking. We build weaving looms for fiber artists across the U.S. We use TechShop as an extension of our manufacturing capability. And in looking at some of the points that you've made about children being creative and people being able to access these technologies, one of the things we did—when you hear about public-private partnerships, it's normally construed to be a large scale. We donated a 3–D printer to our local library, and it has been hugely successful.

We'd like to continue that by adding additional technology: small laser, small CNC. But that idea of making it publicly available, we now have one of the smallest libraries in the country that has that type of technology available. And really—this isn't so much a question as a suggestion—that's another means of putting these tools in the hands of the public and in fact to people across all age spectrums. We focus very appropriately on formal education up through community colleges and such, but having that just generally available to anybody who wants to take the small training course and then come in and create something that they've designed is a very powerful concept. And we can leverage the local libraries to accomplish that.

The President. I think that's a great idea. And look, I'm a big library guy anyway. I love librarians, so a shout-out to all librarians out there. [*Laughter*]

But you're absolutely right that what you're seeing around the country is libraries having to adapt and retool. I still love books, and I still love the feel of turning a page and going into a library. But the truth of the matter is, is that the amount of space you need for storage in a library has changed. Reading patterns have changed. People are a lot more tech savvy, visual than they used to be. And what that means is, is that the library as a central repository for information, that needs to be adapted to the 21st century.

And the idea of using libraries as a center point—or as a focal point along with universities, along with public schools, along with certain government agencies where people can access the tools to make things, I think is a great idea. And so, hopefully, some librarians are out there listening.

Generally, the United—the Federal Government doesn't manage libraries, so this would—talk to the mayor here, I'll bet he's got some pull maybe with the libraries here in Pittsburgh. But I think it's a wonderful idea.

Let me just close by saying this. I want to repeat: Manufacturing is doing better than it's done in the last—any time in the last 20 years. We're seeing more entrepreneurship in manufacturing than we've seen in the last 20 years, more manufacturing startups. Large manufacturers who had moved overseas are starting to bring manufacturing back, in part because our workers are so productive, we remain the largest and most prosperous market in the world, and because of things like energy costs that are

a lot lower here in the United States than they are in a lot of other places in the country.

So we've got a lot of things going for us. The one thing that's inhibiting us is, we are not maximizing Government policies that would give an extra boost to manufacturing. You were mentioning roads earlier; we've got 2 trillion dollars' worth of deferred maintenance: roads, bridges, water systems, a smart grid that can transmit energy more efficiently, an air-traffic-control system that could cut airline emissions by 30 percent, their fuels by 30 percent, which would actually, potentially lower airline ticket prices and reduce delays.

All of that would be a huge boost to manufacturing, and those jobs can't be exported, because they've got to be—by definition, if you're rebuilding infrastructure, it's got to be done here. The fact that Congress has not been willing to take me up so far on my proposal to aggressively fund infrastructure right now makes no sense. We would reduce our unemployment rate, put hard hats back to work right now. And the spinoffs would be enormous.

We know that if we changed our Tax Code so that instead of giving tax loopholes to things that aren't producing economic value and instead are incentivizing and reducing the tax burden on small startups and folks who are doing manufacturing, that would give a boost to our economy right now.

So there are just certain steps that we can be taking to accelerate the great work that's already being done around the country, building off what the private sector does, but leveraging it: investing more in research and development that always has big payoffs, making sure that we've investing in our community colleges so that our workers are trained for the jobs that are actually created.

This is a challenging and competitive time. But as I told you before, if you ask companies where's the best place to do business, they say, the United States of America, that's where we want to invest in. That's the first time they've said that in over a decade. People think we've got the best cards, but we've got to use them. And that requires Congress breaking out of this mentality that says, if I propose it, they're opposed to it. I'm talking obviously about the Republicans.

And we're not going to agree on everything, but we can agree on some basic steps that historically weren't partisan. Infrastructure didn't used to be partisan. Eisenhower worked with Democrats to build an Interstate Highway System. Research and development didn't used to be partisan. That was something everybody agreed was important to make—and that Government had to make those investments, in some cases, because the private sector just couldn't justify the costs of true basic research.

Making sure that our—that we had the best university system in the world and that it was accessible. When I went to school, the amount of debt that I took out for my entire undergraduate education—and I got some grants, and I worked while I was there—but I basically paid off my entire student debt my first year out of school. I had to take a job I didn't like that much to do it, but I knocked it out. Kids these days are just as hard-working if not more hard-working and conscientious than I am, but they're still coming out with $25,000, $30,000 worth of debt. We can do something about that.

So I don't—I want everybody to feel optimistic and hopeful about the future of manufacturing and the future of entrepreneurship and the future of the American economy and our huge advantage in innovation. But I want, also, everybody to be paying attention to the debates that are taking place in Washington, and don't just take for granted that somehow gridlock is inevitable or that we don't have good policies that we could be pursuing right now. We do. The reason we don't pursue them is because of politics. And we've got one party that just decides they want to say no to everything because they're looking at the next election instead of what's good for the next generation.

All of you inspire confidence in me. And if that's reflected in how we operate in Washington, I think we're going to do just fine.

All right? Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:41 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Newton, chairman and founder, TechShop, Inc.; Rich Fitzgerald, county executive, Alleghany County, PA; and Sheila M. Harrity, principal, Worcester Technical High School in Worcester, MA. The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Capture of Ahmed Abu Khattala by United States Special Forces and Federal Bureau of Investigation Personnel in Benghazi, Libya
June 17, 2014

The United States has an unwavering commitment to bring to justice those responsible for harming Americans. Since the deadly attacks on our facilities in Benghazi, I have made it a priority to find and bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of four brave Americans. I recently authorized an operation in Libya to detain an individual charged for his role in these attacks, Ahmed Abu Khatallah. The fact that he is now in U.S. custody is a testament to the painstaking efforts of our military, law enforcement, and intelligence personnel. Because of their courage and professionalism, this individual will now face the full weight of the American justice system.

Even as we welcome the success of this operation, we also pause to remember the four Americans who gave their lives in Benghazi representing their country: Ambassador Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty. As I said shortly after the attack, they exemplified the values that we stand for as a nation, including a commitment to freedom and justice. All Americans should be grateful for their service, just as we are grateful to all our personnel—civilian and military—who represent our country around the globe. We will continue to honor our fallen by carrying on their efforts in support of the Libyan people's aspirations to live in a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic society.

With this operation, the United States has once again demonstrated that we will do whatever it takes to see that justice is done when people harm Americans. We will continue our efforts to bring to justice those who were responsible for the Benghazi attacks. We will remain vigilant against all acts of terrorism, and we will continue to prioritize the protection of our servicemembers and civilians overseas. We will also sustain our support for the Libyan people as they work to overcome years of tyranny and do the difficult work of building a democracy.

Memorandum on Establishing a Comprehensive Framework To Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and Seafood Fraud
June 17, 2014

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Establishing a Comprehensive Framework to Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and Seafood Fraud

The United States is a global leader in sustainable seafood. Over the course of the last 6 years, the United States has largely ended overfishing in federally managed waters and successfully rebuilt a record number of stocks depleted by the excesses of the past. At the same time, effective domestic management and enforcement of fishing regulations have supported near record highs in both landings and revenue for our domestic fishing industry. As a result, the U.S. management scheme is recognized internationally as a model for other countries as they work to end overfishing.

Nevertheless, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing continues to undermine the economic and environmental

sustainability of fisheries and fish stocks, both in the United States and around the world. Global losses attributable to the black market from IUU fishing are estimated to be $10–23 billion annually, weakening profitability for legally caught seafood, fueling illegal trafficking operations, and undermining economic opportunity for legitimate fishermen in the United States and around the world.

It is in the national interest of the United States to promote a framework that supports sustainable fishing practices and combats seafood fraud and the sale of IUU fishing products. To achieve these objectives, the United States will need to enhance the tools it has available to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud, including by implementing the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing; strengthening coordination and implementation of existing authorities to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud; working with the Congress to strengthen and harmonize the enforcement provisions of U.S. statutes for implementing international fisheries agreements; and working with industry and foreign partners to develop and implement new and existing measures, such as voluntary, or other, traceability programs, that can combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud, and ensure accurate labeling for consumers.

Therefore, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to ensure that seafood sold in the United States is legally and sustainably caught and to combat the negative impacts of seafood fraud on the United States, I hereby direct the following:

Section 1. Policy. (a) It shall be the policy of the United States for all executive departments and agencies (agencies) to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud by strengthening coordination and implementation of relevant existing authorities and, where appropriate, by improving the transparency and traceability of the seafood supply chain. All agencies and offices charged with overseeing the seafood supply chain and verifying the authenticity of its products shall implement and enforce relevant policies, regulations, and laws to ensure that seafood sold in the United States is legally caught and accurately labeled.

(b) It shall also be the policy of the United States to promote legally and sustainably caught and accurately labeled seafood and to take appropriate actions within existing authorities and budgets to assist foreign nations in building capacity to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud. In addition, agencies shall identify opportunities to enhance domestic and international efforts to combat global IUU fishing and seafood fraud.

Sec. 2. Establishment. There is established, as a subcommittee reporting to the National Ocean Council established by Executive Order 13547 of July 19, 2010 (Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes), a Presidential Task Force on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and Seafood Fraud (Task Force), to be co-chaired by the Secretaries of State and Commerce, or their designees. The Task Force shall meet not later than 60 days from the date of this memorandum and at least quarterly thereafter.

Sec. 3. Membership. In addition to the Co-Chairs, the Task Force shall include designated senior-level representatives from:

(a) the Department of Defense;

(b) the Department of Justice;

(c) the Department of the Interior;

(d) the Department of Agriculture;

(e) the Department of Commerce;

(f) the Department of Health and Human Services;

(g) the Department of Homeland Security;

(h) the Office of Management and Budget;

(i) the Council on Environmental Quality;

(j) the Office of Science and Technology Policy;

(k) the Office of the United States Trade Representative;

(l) the United States Agency for International Development; and

(m) such agencies and offices as the Co-Chairs may, from time to time, designate.

Sec. 4. Functions. Consistent with the authorities and responsibilities of member agen-

cies, the Task Force shall perform the following functions:

(a) Not later than 180 days after the date of this memorandum, the Task Force shall report to the President through the National Ocean Council, with recommendations for the implementation of a comprehensive framework of integrated programs to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud that emphasizes areas of greatest need. The Task Force should consider a broad range of strategies, including implementation of existing programs, and, if appropriate, development of new, voluntary or other, programs for seafood tracking and traceability. In providing these recommendations, the Task Force shall identify:

(i) existing regulatory authorities and make recommendations regarding further authorities that may be warranted;
(ii) enforcement best practices and challenges;
(iii) benefits provided by such a framework, as well as potential impacts on the U.S. fishing industry;
(iv) opportunities to address these issues at the international level through the regional fisheries management organizations as well as bilateral efforts, such as technical assistance and capacity building;
(v) priority actions that will be taken by agencies, including strengthening coordination between Federal, State, local, and foreign agencies; and
(vi) industry approaches that contribute to efforts to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud, including with respect to seafood traceability and ways to minimize any costs and reporting burdens on small businesses.

(b) Upon receiving guidance from the President on the recommendations developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the Task Force shall begin its implementation of those recommendations and, within 1 year, report to the President, through the National Ocean Council, on its progress.

(c) The Task Force shall also consider the need for other strategies for addressing IUU fishing and seafood fraud and may provide recommendations on the development and enhancement of those strategies.

(d) In undertaking these efforts, the Task Force shall coordinate its efforts with other Presidential initiatives focused on related issues, including the work of the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking established in Executive Order 13648 of July 1, 2013 (Combating Wildlife Trafficking), and activities being conducted pursuant to Executive Order 13659 of February 19, 2014 (Streamlining the Export/Import Process for America's Businesses).

(e) The Task Force shall, as applicable, consult with governments at State, local, tribal, and regional levels to achieve the goals and objectives of this memorandum, as well as the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and academia.

Sec. 5. General Provisions. (a) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable domestic and international law, and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(b) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department, agency, or the head thereof; or
(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to require the disclosure of confidential business information or trade secrets, classified information, law enforcement sensitive information, or other information that must be protected in the interest of national security or public safety.

(d) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

Message to the Congress on the Designation of Meredith M. Broadbent as Chair and Dean A. Pinkert as Vice Chair of the United States International Trade Commission
June 17, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with the provisions of 19 U.S.C. 1330(c)(1), this is to notify the Congress that I have designated Meredith M. Broadbent as Chair and Dean A. Pinkert as Vice Chair of the United States International Trade Commission, effective June 17, 2014.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
June 17, 2014.

Remarks at the Democratic National Committee LGBT Gala in New York City
June 17, 2014

Edith, Robbie, thanks for the wonderfully brief introduction. [*Laughter*] I mean that sincerely. The day that the Supreme Court issued its ruling, *United States* v. *Windsor*, was a great day for America, a clear victory for human decency and equality and justice and freedom. So we thank you for your courage and your inspiration. Give them a big round of applause.

I want to thank Debbie Wasserman Schultz for the great job she's doing as chair of the DNC. Andy Tobias, making sure the money goes to the right places. Yay, Andy! Henry Muñoz—thank you, Henry. Thanks to Sia for the beautiful performance. Our emcee, Jesse Tyler Ferguson. Jesse, congratulations on both your weddings. [*Laughter*] Mitch and Cam finally tied the knot. Michelle and the girls were crying. [*Laughter*]

There are other newlyweds here. Eric Johnson and Mark Parker were married a couple of hours ago. They decided to make this their after-party, pretty cool. If you've got a glass, raise it for Eric and Mark: A lifetime of health and happiness to them.

So Pride Month is a time for celebration, and this year we've got a lot to celebrate. If you think about everything that's happened in the last 12 months, it is remarkable. In nine more States, you're now free to marry the person you love. That includes my two home States of Hawaii and Illinois. The NFL drafted its first openly gay player. The U.S. Postal Service made history by putting an openly gay person on a stamp: the late, great Harvey Milk, smiling from ear to ear.

So now you flash back 10 years ago. Maybe no single issue divided our country more than same-sex marriage. In fact, the Republican Party built their entire strategy for 2004 around this issue. You remember? They calculated, if they put constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage on State ballots, they'd turn out more voters, they'd win. And they frankly were right. People flocked to the polls. Those amendments were on the ballots in 11 States. They passed in every single one.

Now, here's a good bet. They're not going to try the same strategy in 2014. When I took office, only two States had marriage equality. Today, 19 States and the District of Columbia do. There are court rulings pending in other States as well. And despite the great work of some incredibly talented and courageous lawyers, it is important to understand, it's not just the laws that are changing, it's hearts and minds.

The conventional wisdom says that all this change is due to young people growing up with different attitudes and their parents—than their parents and their grandparents had. And anybody who has kids knows that there is some truth to that. The basic attitude is, I'm sorry, what is it that you're talking about here?

What's the big deal? But what's been remarkable is the way Americans of all age groups are increasingly embracing marriage equality. And they understand love is love. And for many people whose minds have changed, it was love that did it: love for the child or the grandchild or the friend or the coworker who sat down one day and held their hands and took a deep breath and said, I'm gay.

Almost everybody in this room was that child or grandchild or friend or coworker at some point. And you may not have known it at the time, it may have seemed like an individual act, but in those moments, when you summoned that courage and reached out with that hopeful love, you were doing it for everybody. And that's why I'm here tonight, to say thank you for helping make America more just and more compassionate.

And I want to thank all the incredible friends in the room for the support and guidance that so many of you have offered my administration over the past 5½ years. Now, sometimes, you guys were a little impatient. [*Laughter*] Sometimes, I had to say, will you just settle down for a second? We've got this. [*Laughter*] But because of your help, we've been able to do more to protect the rights of lesbian and gay and bisexual and transgender Americans than any administration in history.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell," because no one should have to hide who you love to serve the country we love. We reauthorized the Violence Against Women's Act with new protections. And I signed a hate crimes law bearing Matthew Shepard's name, because hate-driven violence has taken the lives of too many in this country. It has to end.

I lifted the 22-year ban on people with HIV traveling to the U.S. and prohibited discrimination in hospitals and housing that received Federal funding, because stigma and fear have no place in our laws. We've made it illegal for health insurers to deny coverage to people based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Starting next year, insurance companies that offer coverage to straight couples have to offer it to gay couples too.

We've worked to address and prevent bullying, because it's not enough to say it gets better. We've got to make it better. And today the Senate confirmed two openly gay judges in the same day. Before I took office, only one openly gay judge had been confirmed in history. We have 10 more.

And as I said in my second Inaugural Address, if we're truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well. That's why we stopped defending the so-called Defense of Marriage Act in the courts and argued alongside Edie and Robbie before the highest court in the land. That's why we're working to implement the Court's ruling to extend benefits to married same-sex couples wherever, whenever possible. People have been waiting a long time for justice, and we're working to deliver on it as fast as we can.

So we've got some pretty good reasons to celebrate. That doesn't mean, though, that we can grow complacent. Progress doesn't just have to be fought for, it has to be defended. Today, a lawmaker in Oklahoma is trying to ban all marriages rather than recognize same-sex marriage. [*Laughter*] Now, that seems a little over the top, but that's just my opinion. [*Laughter*] The Texas Republican Party's State platform endorses gay conversion therapy in 2014. Fierce legal fights are underway to stop marriage equality from expanding any further or to prevent court rulings from taking effect. And most of all, there are still Americans out there who are vulnerable and alone and still need our support.

So we can't stop. We've got to keep fighting. We've got to keep fighting for the human rights of people around the world, to those who face violence and intimidation every single day and who live under governments that have made the existence of anybody who's LGBT illegal. We need to send a message to those folks. I want them to hear from the President of the United States: We believe in your dignity and your equality, and the United States stands with you.

And we've got to keep fighting to protect the lives of our brothers and sisters here at home. Last week, I got a chance to watch the film

version of "The Normal Heart." And I actually called Ryan Murphy afterwards to tell him to how much I admired it. It's more than just a story from our past. It's a reminder that we have to stay vigilant in the fight against HIV/AIDS, which still claims the lives of too many Americans, especially low-income Americans, especially the minority LGBT community that doesn't have all the resources, doesn't have all the information they need. It still takes a toll.

Now, I know that many people in this room have photographs with smiling friends from days gone by, and a lot of those friends are gone, taken before their time, both because of a disease and because there was a Government that failed to recognize that disease in time. And that can happen again if we're not careful.

And that's why my administration created the first comprehensive national HIV/AIDS strategy. That's why we're working toward an AIDS-free generation, so fewer people have to know the pain of this disease and so our country doesn't lose any more of its sons and daughters.

We've got to keep fighting for equality in the workplace. Right now there are more States that allow same-sex marriage than there are States that prohibit discrimination against LGBT workers. Think about that.

We have laws that say Americans can't be fired from their jobs because of the color of their skin or for their religion or because of a disability. But every day, millions of Americans go to work knowing that they could lose their job, not because of anything they did, but because of who they are. That is not right. It is wrong.

Now, Congress has been considering legislation to protect LGBT workers for decades. I want you to understand: for decades. Last November, it finally looked like we were getting somewhere. The Senate passed ENDA, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Had strong bipartisan support. But shockingly enough, the House refused to act. Meanwhile, millions of Americans are still waiting. It's been decades.

The majority of Fortune 500 companies, small businesses, already have nondiscrimination policies that protect their employees, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it helps them attract and retain the best talent. They're right. We don't benefit as a country or an economy, businesses don't benefit if they're leaving talent off the field.

And that's why I've directed my staff to prepare for my signature an Executive order prohibiting discrimination by Federal contractors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Because in the United States of America, who you are and who you love shouldn't be a fireable offense. It would be better, by the way, if Congress passed a more comprehensive law that didn't just cover Federal contractors. And we need to keep working on that, so don't take the pressure off Congress.

This seems to be a pattern these days. Everybody has just given up so much on Congress that we end up doing something through Executive order. And that's helpful, but it doesn't reach everybody that needs to be reached. Congress needs to start working again, so let's make sure that we keep the pressure up there.

This is a country where no matter who you are or what you look like or how you came up or what your last name is or who you love, if you work hard and you take responsibility, you should be able to make it. That's the story of America. That's the story of this movement: people who stand up and come out and march and organize and fight to expand the rights we enjoy and extend them to other people; people who work against the odds to build a nation in which nobody is a second-class citizen, everybody is free to who—to be who they are and that you're judged based on, are you kind and competent and work hard and treat each other with respect and are a team player and look after your community and care and love and cherish your kids? That's how we're supposed to be judged.

That's the fight that brought all of us here today. That's what made it possible for me to stand up here as your President. It's what gave many people in this room the freedom to live

their lives freely. It's what should inspire us to keep working to make sure all our children grow up in an America where differences are respected and even celebrated and where love is love.

And it is also why those of us who in the past might have not always enjoyed the full liberty that this amazing country of ours has to offer, that we've got to be thinking about others who are still struggling. That's why this community has to be just as concerned about poor kids, regardless of sexual orientation. That's why this community should be fighting for workers who aren't getting paid a minimum wage that's high enough.

That's why this community has to show compassion for the illegal immigrant who is contributing to our society and just wants a chance to move out of the shadows. That's why this community should be concerned about equal pay for equal work, straight or gay. That's why this community has to be concerned about the remaining vestiges of racial discrimination.

If you've experienced being on the outside, you've got to be one to bring more folks in even once you are inside. That's our task. That's our job. That's why we're here tonight.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:36 p.m. at Gotham Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Edith Windsor, plaintiff in the U.S. Supreme Court case *United States* v. *Windsor*; Roberta A. Kaplan, partner, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, who argued before the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Ms. Windsor in *United States* v. *Windsor*; Andrew Tobias, treasurer, and Henry R. Muñoz III, national finance committee chairman, Democratic National Committee; musician Sia Furler; actor Jesse Tyler Ferguson, who portrays the character Mitch in ABC's "Modern Family" program; Dallas, TX, residents P. Mark Parker and Eric Johnson; Michael Sam, defensive end, National Football League's St. Louis Rams; Darrin P. Gayles, judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida; Staci M. Yandle, judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois; Deborah A. Batts, judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York; Oklahoma State Rep. Mike Turner; and filmmaker Ryan Murphy, producer and director of "The Normal Heart."

Remarks at the White House Maker Faire
June 18, 2014

Everybody, have a seat. Thank you. Thank you. Well, good morning. And welcome to the first-ever White House Maker Faire, which is pretty exciting. Now, the—let me start off by saying, the only thing that I asked my staff about is, why is there an "e" at the end of "faire"? [*Laughter*] I mean, I wasn't sure, is there jousting? Do we all have to get dressed up, or what? So I'm just warning you, next year, the "e" may be gone. I don't know exactly who came up with that. This is America. We don't have "e's" at the end of "fair." [*Laughter*] All right? So I'm just saying. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. Whoever came up with that idea, you let me know.

We've got three outstanding Members of Congress who are here: Bill Foster, Rush Holt, and Russ [Mark]* Takano. We've got National Science Foundation Director France Córdova, who's here—France. Our NIH Director, Francis Collins. My Science Adviser, John Holdren. We've got innovators like Dale Dougherty, who's here, who helped launch the very first Maker Faire nearly a decade ago. Dale, stand up. We have Intel's youngest intern, who I know because he's probably the only person who was ever allowed to fire a marshmallow in the White House—[*laughter*]—Joey Hudy. Where's Joey? There he is. There's still a stain—[*laughter*]—from where the marshmallow hit. It was scary.

* White House correction.

The thing just went out a little—you don't want to be at the other—receiving end of that marshmallow. He also brought, by the way, his "3x3x3 LED Shield," which is his.

And we've got some wonderful folks like our science guy, Bill Nye, who's here all the time, and Mr. Kamen, a great inventor. So this is a smart group right here. There are some innovative folks.

Before I begin, I have to ask: What on Earth have you done to my house? [*Laughter*] I mean, there's a mobile factory on the South Lawn. There's a robotic giraffe. There's a giant red weather balloon in the Rose Garden. There's a paper-craft dinosaur head in the hallway. Over here is a 3–D-printed sculpture of my State of the Union Address. [*Laughter*] Clearly, there could have been some edits right there in the middle. [*Laughter*] It—the sculpture clearly goes on too long. [*Laughter*] So this is not your typical day at the White House.

We invited you here because today is DIY—today's DIY is tomorrow's "Made in America." Your projects are examples of a revolution that's taking place in American manufacturing, a revolution that can help us create new jobs and industries for decades to come.

Five years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our businesses have created jobs for 51 straight months. That's 9.4 million new jobs in total. But we know we've got to create more. And one of the best ways to create more good jobs is by boosting American manufacturing.

So we've seen an auto industry that's come roaring back, and our manufacturing sector has been adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s, about 640,000 new manufacturing jobs since February of 2010. And in the absence of much action from Congress, we're doing what we can—I'm doing what I can on my own—to keep that progress going. So I've launched four new high-tech manufacturing hubs across the country, with more on the way. Yesterday I went to the TechShop in Pittsburgh, where you can use equipment like laser cutters and 3–D printers for about the cost of a gym membership. We announced new steps that we're taking to help entrepreneurs turn their ideas into products. More than 90 mayors made commitments to help entrepreneurs manufacture new things in their communities, and we're proud to have some of those mayors here today.

So we're going to do whatever we can to bring good manufacturing jobs back to our shores, because our parents and our grandparents created the world's largest economy and strongest middle class not by buying stuff, but by building stuff, by making stuff, by tinkering and inventing and building; by making and selling things first in a growing national market and then in an international market, stuff made in America.

And the good news is, is that new tools and technologies are making the building of things easier than ever. There is a democratization of manufacturing that is potentially available because of technology. Across our country, ordinary Americans are inventing incredible things, and then they're able to bring them to these fairs like Makers Faires. And you never know where this kind of enthusiasm and creativity and innovation could lead. So in the 1970s, Steve Wozniak designed the Apple I to show off for the members of the Homebrew Computer Club. And today, Apple is worth about $550 billion. I wish I had been there. [*Laughter*] I'd like to think that I would have said, that's a good idea. [*Laughter*] Let me—here, take my hundred dollars. [*Laughter*]

And while I don't know if the projects here today are the next Apple, I do know that by looking at some of these exhibits, it was just incredible what is being done.

So you take the team from the Workshop School in West Philadelphia, and compared to most other schools, there are a lot of advantages they don't have. This is a poor community. They do have, however, Simon Hauger, a principal who is so talented, a student once said, "He could teach algebra to a guinea pig." [*Laughter*] And with Simon's help, we've got Derrick Bell here, Taliya Carter, Joshua Pigford. Their team built a biodiesel sports car that gets around a hundred miles per gallon, which is why the Secret Service didn't let me drive it. [*Laughter*]

But what's happening is, is that the young people now are able to learn by doing. So math, science all gets incorporated into the task of actually making something, which the students tell me makes the subject matter that much more interesting.

Or you've got Jen McCabe, who is setting up a space called Factorli, in Las Vegas, to provide custom, small-scale manufacturing, kind of like a Kinko's or a copy shop, but instead of printing flyers, they're going to be able to print custom parts for American products.

There's Marc Roth from San Francisco. A few years ago, Marc found himself homeless. And at a shelter, Marc heard about a local TechShop that teaches folks how to use new tools like laser cutters and 3–D printers, and he signed up. And within 16 months, he had started SF Laser, his own laser-cutting business. He just launched a program called the Learning Shelter to teach tech and manufacturing skills to other folks who are trying to get back on their feet.

As you were going through the exhibits, you saw young people who are students at places like MIT helping to design mobile factories that bring the tools for invention to communities that might have thought that kind of stuff was out of reach for them. An incredible story of a young woman who figured out how to make a cheap incubator that's already helping 60,000 newbies around the world who can't afford the sort of expensive equipment that we have in our hospitals.

It gives you a sense that we are at the dawn of something big. And one of the professors who I had a chance to speak to as I was taking the tour described it as analogous to where we were with the Internet 25, 30 years ago. In the same way that we are at that—we were at that time reorganizing how we could use data and information, we are now at a point where we're going to be able to reorganize how we think about making things and marrying the information revolution to what's been an analogue manufacturing system. And it's incredibly exciting, and we're at the cutting edge of it, but we've got to make sure that we continue to be at the cutting edge of it.

And so as a country, we ought to be doing what Simon and Jen and Marc are doing every day, and we've got to make sure that more Americans have the skills and opportunities to land a job in a growing industry or to create entirely new industries. So that's why I'm declaring today a "National Day of Making," and it's why I'm backing those words up with action.

We're helping schools take shop class into the 21st century, because one of the things I'm really interested in is how do we redesign high schools so that young people are able to do stuff as they are learning. And that's not just true for schools in inner-city Philadelphia, that's true for schools generally, in part because it also then gives new opportunities for young people who may have different learning styles to thrive in ways that they might not if they're just sitting there listening to a lecture.

We're providing new support for startups that want to file for a patent. From the Defense Department to the SBA and from the National Science Foundation to NASA, we're doing more to help entrepreneurs start new businesses that make things in America.

And of course, this is not just a job for Government. Today, more than 150 colleges and universities are committing to giving young people more hands-on opportunities to make things. So a few minutes ago, a young man named Partha Unnava showed me the letter announcing that commitment, and of course, it was on some metal that was 3–D printed. He couldn't just give me a piece of paper. [*Laughter*] It's harder to file, by the way, but it looks cooler. [*Laughter*]

The private sector is stepping up as well. From Indiegogo and Etsy to Disney and Intel, companies have pledged to help unleash a new wave of innovation here in America. And these companies do different things, they come from different industries, but they share the belief that when we tap the potential of every American, all of us are better off.

Camille and Genevieve Beatty are here today from Asheville, North Carolina. They're 14 and 12 years old. Where are they? Raise your hands, guys. There you are. [*Applause*] See? They happen to be the cofounders of Beatty Robotics.

Genevieve does the wiring, Camille machines the metal. As their website puts it, "Who needs a paper route when you can start a robotics company?" [*Laughter*] That's a pretty good motto. That's great, I love that. [*Laughter*]

But the Beattys say one of the main things they've learned over the last few years isn't about power tools or engineering or electronics. What they've learned is that, "If you can imagine it, then you can do it—whatever it is." And that's a pretty good motto for America.

This is a country that imagined a railroad connecting a continent, imagined electricity powering our cities and towns, imagined skyscrapers reaching into the heavens and an Internet that brings us closer together. So we imagined these things, then we did them. And that's in our DNA. That's who we are. We're not done yet. And I hope every company, every college, every community, every citizen joins us as we lift up makers and builders and doers across the country. If we do, I know we're going to be able to create more good jobs in the years to come. We're going to create entire new industries that we can't yet imagine, although, I suspect Camille and Genevieve may have already figured it out. [*Laughter*]

And we're going to rebuild our economy and restore our middle class and give opportunities for people whose potential is not yet tapped. There are kids out there, there are adults out there right now who have a great idea. And they don't have access to the capital they need. They don't have the tools they need to put together a prototype. They don't know how to link up with folks who could help refine those ideas. And what the maker movement does, what technology does, what the information revolution does is it allows all those folks to suddenly be a part of this creative process. And what better place to do that than here in the United States of America?

This is a place where we know how to invent and we know how to dream and we know how to take risks. And this is a place where people who work hard have always been able to make it. We want to make sure that continues. So thanks for the great work you're all doing. It's very inspiring.

God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dale Dougherty, founder and chief executive officer, Maker Media, Inc.; Joey Hudy, student participant in the 2012 White House Science Fair; William S. Nye, television personality and executive director of the Planetary Society; Dean L. Kamen, founder, DEKA Research and Development Corp.; Stephen G. Wozniak, cofounder, Apple, Inc.; Simon Hauger, principal and cofounder, and Jacques Wells, Derrick Bell, Taliya Carter, and Joshua Pigford, students, the Workshop School in Philadelphia, PA; Jane M. Chen, cofounder and chief business officer, Embrace Innovations; Partha Unnava, chief executive officer, Better Walk. He also referred to Proclamation 9143, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Meeting of the President's Export Council
June 19, 2014

Sorry to mess up your meeting.

[*At this point, the President walked around and greeted members of the Council.*]

Well, hello, everybody. Sorry to interrupt the flow of the meeting. I just wanted to say thank you to all of you who are here. Some of you have been serving on our Export Council for quite some time. Some of you are here as new additions, but all of you have been extraordinarily successful in your various fields. And it gives us an enormous opportunity to hear from you in very concrete terms about how we can advance not just America's export agenda, but how we can build the kind of economic future that we want for our kids and our grandkids.

For the last 51 months, we have created jobs here in the United States, 9.4 million jobs in all. But we're going to have to create more. And one of the best ways to do it is to boost American manufacturing and American exports. That's why, since I came into office, we have been promoting American products and businesses when I travel overseas. It's why we created the President's Export Council in 2010. There are some of the most iconic companies in the world, Boeing being an example, Xerox being another one.

And with your help, exports have driven one-third of the economic growth in our recovery and now support over 11 million U.S. jobs. Last year, we exported $2.3 trillion in goods and services, which was an alltime high. And business executives around the globe say that the United States is the best place to locate, the best place to invest, and the best place to hire. And that's the first time that they've said that—that we are number one when it comes to their desirable location to invest—this is the first time they've said that in over a decade.

So the "Made in America" brand is stronger than ever. And as we saw yesterday at the first White House Maker Faire—I was out there watching these 22-year-olds coming up with incredible things—it is going to be a remarkable future that we have to look ahead to. Because in many ways, manufacturing is becoming easier; some of the barriers to entry are lowering. It gives inventors and entrepreneurs the opportunity to create new products and services in ways that we can't even imagine. And we want to make sure that all those trends accelerate here in the United States.

So this is a moment of opportunity. We've got a chance to expend—extend our competitive advantage in the world. That's what this meeting is about. One thing I want to focus on today is opening up even more new markets to "Made in America" products. We're working very hard to finalize trade agreements with our partners in Europe and in Asia that will make us the center of a free trade hub covering two-thirds of the world economy. And Mr. Michael Froman has been putting in a lot of miles trying to make sure that that happens. And I know he's consulted with some of you, not just big companies, but a lot of small and medium-sized businesses who have enormous opportunities if we're able to open up these markets and oftentimes are the ones that have the hardest time navigating through some of the barriers that are out there.

I especially want to increase trade and investment in the region. And this is going to be one of the issues we discuss in August. There has been some explosive growth in certain parts of the world where we're just not doing enough, Africa as being a prime example. You've got 6 of the 10 fastest growing economies in Africa, a young population that is growing rapidly. Some of these economies are doing very, very well, but we're not penetrating those markets as well as we should have.

And I think we've got a great opportunity in August with an African Leaders Summit that's going to be taking place for us to talk about trade and commerce, because that's really what that continent is interested in. They're not interested in aid as much as they are trade, development, and partnering with the private sector.

And as your businesses know well, when we export products overseas, we're creating jobs and opportunities here at home. That's the focus here today and every day of my Presidency: How do we create thriving businesses that are also able to create great jobs that allow people not just to stay in the middle class, but to work their way into the middle class if they work hard and take responsibility? And all of you have done that.

This Council is doing great work. And with that, I'm going to turn it back over to Jay [Jim]* to hear about some of the ideas that you've come up with and how we can help advance this agenda.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to W. James McNerney, Jr., Chairman, President's Export Council.

* White House correction.

Remarks on the Situation in Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters
June 19, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. I just met with my national security team to discuss the situation in Iraq. We've been meeting regularly to review the situation since ISIL, a terrorist organization that operates in Iraq and Syria, made advances inside of Iraq. As I said last week, ISIL poses a threat to the Iraqi people, to the region, and to U.S. interests. So today I wanted to provide you an update on how we're responding to the situation.

First, we are working to secure our Embassy and personnel operating inside of Iraq. As President, I have no greater priority than the safety of our men and women serving overseas. So I've taken some steps to relocate some of our Embassy personnel, and we've sent reinforcements to better secure our facilities.

Second, at my direction, we have significantly increased our intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets so that we've got a better picture of what's taking place inside of Iraq. And this will give us a greater understanding of what ISIL is doing, where it's located, and how we might support efforts to counter this threat.

Third, the United States will continue to increase our support to Iraqi security forces. We're prepared to create joint operation centers in Baghdad and northern Iraq to share intelligence and coordinate planning to confront the terrorist threat of ISIL. Through our new counterterrorism partnership fund, we're prepared to work with Congress to provide additional equipment. We have had advisers in Iraq through our Embassy, and we're prepared to send a small number of additional American military advisers—up to 300—to assess how we can best train, advise, and support Iraqi security forces going forward.

American forces will not be returning to combat in Iraq, but we will help Iraqis as they take the fight to terrorists who threaten the Iraqi people, the region, and American interests as well.

Fourth, in recent days, we've positioned additional U.S. military assets in the region. Because of our increased intelligence resources, we're developing more information about potential targets associated with ISIL. And going forward, we will be prepared to take targeted and precise military action, if and when we determine that the situation on the ground requires it. If we do, I will consult closely with Congress and leaders in Iraq and in the region.

I want to emphasize, though, that the best and most effective response to a threat like ISIL will ultimately involve partnerships where local forces, like Iraqis, take the lead.

Finally, the United States will lead a diplomatic effort to work with Iraqi leaders and the countries in the region to support stability in Iraq. At my direction, Secretary Kerry will depart this weekend for meetings in the Middle East and Europe, where he'll be able to consult with our allies and partners. And just as all Iraqis' neighbors must respect Iraq's territorial integrity, all of Iraq's neighbors have a vital interest in ensuring that Iraq does not descend into civil war or become a safe haven for terrorists.

Above all, Iraqi leaders must rise above their differences and come together around a political plan for Iraq's future. Shia, Sunni, Kurds—all Iraqis—must have confidence that they can advance their interests and aspirations through the political process rather than through violence. National unity meetings have to go forward to build consensus across Iraq's different communities. Now that the results of Iraq's recent election has been certified, a new Parliament should convene as soon as possible. The formation of a new Government will be an opportunity to begin a genuine dialogue and forge a Government that represents the legitimate interests of all Iraqis.

Now, it's not the place for the United States to choose Iraq's leaders. It is clear, though, that only leaders that can govern with an inclusive agenda are going to be able to truly bring the Iraqi people together and help them through this crisis. Meanwhile, the United States will not pursue military options that support one sect inside of Iraq at the expense of

another. There's no military solution inside of Iraq, certainly not one that is led by the United States. But there is an urgent need for an inclusive political process, a more capable Iraqi security force, and counterterrorism efforts that deny groups like ISIL a safe haven.

In closing, recent days have reminded us of the deep scars left by America's war in Iraq. Alongside the loss of nearly 4,500 American patriots, many veterans carry the wounds of that war and will for the rest of their lives. Here at home, Iraq sparked vigorous debates and intense emotions in the past, and we've seen some of those debates resurface.

But what's clear from the last decade is the need for the United States to ask hard questions before we take action abroad, particularly military action. The most important question we should all be asking, the issue that we have to keep front and center—the issue that I keep front and center—is what is in the national security interests of the United States of America. As Commander in Chief, that's what I stay focused on. As Americans, that's what all of us should be focused on.

And going forward, we will continue to consult closely with Congress. We will keep the American people informed. We will remain vigilant. And we will continue to do everything in our power to protect the security of the United States and the safety of the American people.

So with that, I'm going to take a couple of questions. I'll start with Colleen McCain Nelson of the Wall Street Journal.

Need for a Unity Government in Iraq/Reconciliation Efforts

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Do you have any confidence in Prime Minister Maliki at this point? And can Maliki bring political stability to Iraq?

The President. As I said, it's not our job to choose Iraq's leaders. Part of what our patriots fought for during many years in Iraq was the right and the opportunity for Iraqis to determine their own destiny and choose their own leaders. But I don't think it—there's any secret that right now, at least, there is deep divisions between Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish leaders. And as long as those deep divisions continue or worsen, it's going to be very hard for an Iraqi central Government to direct an Iraqi military to deal with these threats.

And so we've consulted with Prime Minister Maliki, and we've said that to him privately. We've said it publicly that whether he is Prime Minister or any other leader aspires to lead the country, that it has to be an agenda in which Sunni, Shia, and Kurd all feel that they have the opportunity to advance their interests through the political process. And we've seen over the last 2 years, actually dating back to 2008, 2009—but, I think, worse over the last 2 years—the sense among Sunnis that their interests were not being served, that legislation that had been promised around, for example, de-Ba'athification had been stalled.

I think that you hear similar complaints that the Government in Baghdad has not sufficiently reached out to some of the tribes and been able to bring them in to a process that gives them a sense of being part of a unity government or a single nation-state. And that has to be worked through.

Part of the reason why we saw better equipped Iraqi security forces with larger numbers not be able to hold contested territory against ISIL probably reflects that lack of a sense of commitment on the part of Sunni communities to work with Baghdad. And that has to be fixed if we're going to get through this crisis.

Jim Acosta [CNN].

U.S. National Security Interests in Iraq/Deployment of U.S. Military Personnel to Iraq/2011 Withdrawal of U.S. Military Forces From Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Americans may look at this decision that you're making today as a sneak preview of coming attractions, that the number of advisers that you're planning to send in may just be the beginning of a boots-on-the-ground scenario down the road. Why is Iraq's civil war in the national security interests of the United States? And are you concerned about the potential for mission creep?

The President. I think we always have to guard against mission creep, so let me repeat what I've said in the past: American combat troops are not going to be fighting in Iraq again.

We do not have the ability to simply solve this problem by sending in tens of thousands of troops and committing the kinds of blood and treasure that has already been expended in Iraq. Ultimately, this is something that is going to have to be solved by the Iraqis.

It is in our national security interests not to see an all-out civil war inside of Iraq, not just for humanitarian reasons, but because that ultimately can be destabilizing throughout the region. And in addition to having strong allies there that we are committed to protecting, obviously, issues like energy and global energy markets continues to be important.

We also have an interest in making sure that we don't have a safe haven that continues to grow for ISIL and other extremist jihadist groups who could use that as a base of operations for planning and targeting ourselves, our personnel overseas, and eventually the homeland. And if they accumulate more money, they accumulate more ammunition, more military capability, larger numbers, that poses great dangers not just to allies of ours like Jordan, which is very close by, but it also poses a great danger potentially to Europe and ultimately the United States.

We have already seen inside of Syria that—or groups like ISIL that right now are fighting with other extremist groups or an Asad regime that was nonresponsive to a Sunni majority there, that that has attracted more and more jihadists or would-be jihadists, some of them from Europe. They then start traveling back to Europe, and that, over time, can create a cadre of terrorists that could harm us.

So we have humanitarian interests in preventing bloodshed. We have strategic interests in stability in the region. We have counterterrorism interests. All those have to be addressed.

The initial effort for us to get situational awareness through the reconnaissance and surveillance that we've already done, coupled with some of our best people on the ground doing assessments of exactly what the situation is—starting, by the way, with the perimeter around Baghdad and making sure that that's not overrun—that's a good investment for us to make. But that does not foreshadow a larger commitment of troops to actually fight in Iraq. That would not be effective in meeting the core interests that we have.

Q. Just very quickly, do you wish you had left a residual force in Iraq? Any regrets about that decision in 2011?

The President. Well, keep in mind, that wasn't a decision made by me; that was a decision made by the Iraqi Government. We offered a modest residual force to help continue to train and advise Iraqi security forces. We had a core requirement, which we require in any situation where we have U.S. troops overseas, and that is, is that they are provided immunity since they're being invited by the sovereign Government there, so that if, for example, they end up acting in self-defense if they are attacked and find themselves in a tough situation, that they're not somehow hauled before a foreign court. That's a core requirement that we have for U.S. troop presence anywhere.

The Iraqi Government and Prime Minister Maliki declined to provide us that immunity. And so I think it is important, though, to recognize that, despite that decision, that we have continued to provide them with very intensive advice and support and have continued throughout this process, over the last 5 years, to not only offer them our assistance militarily, but we've also continued to urge the kinds of political compromises that we think are ultimately necessary in order for them to have a functioning, multisectarian democracy inside the country.

Juliet Eilperin [Washington Post]. There you are.

Syria/U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy/Yemen

Q. Mr. President, you just mentioned Syria a moment ago. The United States has been slow to provide significant weapons and training directly to the Syrian opposition. Has the expan-

sion of the Syria war into Iraq changed your mind about the type of weapons and training you are now willing to give the opposition there? Is that what prompted Secretary Kerry to say of Syria, "We are augmenting our assistance in significant ways"? And can you elaborate on what you are you doing now that you weren't doing before?

The President. That assessment about the dangers of what was happening in Syria have existed since we—since the very beginning of the Syrian civil war. The question has never been whether we thought this was a serious problem. The question has always been, is there the capacity of moderate opposition on the ground to absorb and counteract extremists that might have been pouring in, as well as an Asad regime supported by Iran and Russia that outmanned them and was ruthless?

And so we have consistently provided that opposition with support. Oftentimes, the challenge is, if you have former farmers or teachers or pharmacists who now are taking up opposition against a battle-hardened regime, with support from external actors that have a lot at stake, how quickly can you get them trained, how effective are you able to mobilize them? And that continues to be a challenge. And even before the situation that we saw with ISIL going into Iraq, we had already tried to maximize what we can do to support a moderate opposition that not only can counteract the brutality of Asad, but also can make sure that in the minds of Sunnis, they don't think that their only alternative is either Mr. Asad or extremist groups like ISIL or al-Nusra.

Q. And can you speak to what you might be doing differently, as the Secretary of State alluded to?

The President. Well, I think that the key to both Syria and Iraq is going to be a combination of what happens inside the country working with moderate Syrian opposition, working with an Iraqi Government that is inclusive, and us laying down a more effective counterterrorism platform that gets all the countries in the region pulling in the same direction. And I alluded to this in the West Point speech. This is—I talked about it today with respect to the counterterrorism partnership fund.

There is going to be a long-term problem in this region in which we have to build and partner with countries that are committed to our interests, our values. And at the same time, we have immediate problems with terrorist organizations that may be advancing. And rather than try to play Whac-A-Mole wherever these terrorist organizations may pop up, what we have to do is to be able to build effective partnerships, make sure that they have capacity. Some of the assets that have been devoted solely to Afghanistan over the last decade we've got to shift to make sure that we have coverage in the Middle East and North Africa.

You look at a country like Yemen, a very impoverished country and one that has its own sectarian or ethnic divisions, there is—we do have a committed partner in President Hadi and his Government. And we have been able to help to develop their capacities without putting large numbers of U.S. troops on the ground at the same time as we've got enough CT, or counterterrorism, capabilities that we're able to go after folks that might try to hit our Embassy or might be trying to export terrorism into Europe or the United States.

And looking at how we can create more of those models is going to be part of the solution in dealing with both Syria and Iraq. But in order for us to do that, we still need to have actual governments on the ground that we can partner with and that we've got some confidence are going to pursue the political policies of inclusiveness. In Yemen, for example, a wide-ranging national dialogue that took a long time, but helped to give people a sense that there is a legitimate political outlet for grievances that they may have.

Peter Maer [CBS Radio News].

Iraq-U.S. Relations/Sectarian Divisions in Iraq/Need for a Unity Government in Iraq/U.S. Military Role in Iraq

Q. Thank you, sir. Going back to where you see Prime Minister al-Maliki playing a role at this point, you said that it's a time to rise above differences, that there's a need for more

inclusive government. Is he a unifier? And how much clout does the United States ultimately have with any of the leadership in Iraq at this point really?

The President. Well, we still provide them significant assistance. I think they recognize that, unlike some other players in the region, we don't have territorial ambitions in their country. We're not looking to control their assets or their energy. We want to make sure that we're vindicating the enormous effort and sacrifice that was made by our troops in giving them an opportunity to build a stable, inclusive society that can prosper and deliver for the basic needs and aspirations of the Iraqi people.

And at the same time, they are a sovereign country. They have their own politics. And what we have tried to do is to give them our best advice about how they can solve their political problems. Now that they are in crisis, we are indicating to them that there is not going to be a simple military solution to this issue. If you start seeing the various groups inside of Iraq simply go to their respective corners, then it is almost certain that Baghdad and the central Government will not be able to control huge chunks of their own country. The only way they can do that is if there are credible Sunni leaders, both at the national level and at the local level, who have confidence that a Shia majority, that the Kurds, that all those folks are committed to a fair and just governance of the country.

Right now that doesn't exist. There's too much suspicion, there's too much mistrust. And the good news is that an election took place in which despite all this mistrust, despite all this frustration, despite all this anger, you still had millions of Iraqis turn out, in some cases, in very dangerous circumstances. You now have a court that has certified those elections, and you have a constitutional process to advance government formation.

So far, at least, the one bit of encouraging news that we've seen inside of Iraq is that all the parties have said they continue to be committed to choosing a leadership and a government through the existing constitutional order.

So what you're seeing, I think, is, as the prospects of civil war heighten, many Iraqi leaders stepping back and saying, let's not plunge back into the abyss; let's see if we can resolve this politically. But they don't have a lot of time. And you have a group like ISIL that is doing everything its—that it can to descend the country back into chaos.

And so one of the messages that we had for Prime Minister Maliki, but also for the Speaker of the House and the other leadership inside of Iraq is, get going on this Government formation. It'll make it a lot easier for them to shape a military strategy. It'll also make it possible for us to partner much more effectively than we can currently.

Q. Given the Prime Minister's track record, is he a unifier? Can he play that role after what we've seen play out over the last couple of weeks is brought into play?

The President. I think the test is before him and other Iraqi leaders as we speak. Right now they can make a series of decisions. Regardless of what's happened in the past, right now is a moment where the fate of Iraq hangs in the balance, and the test for all of them is going to be whether they can overcome the mistrust, the deep sectarian divisions, in some cases just political opportunism, and say this is bigger than any one of us and we've got to make sure that we do what's right for the Iraqi people. And that's a challenge.

That's not something that the United States can do for them. That's not something, by the way, that the United States Armed Forces can do for them. We can provide them the space; we can provide them the tools. But ultimately, they're going to have to make those decisions.

In the meantime, my job is to make sure that American personnel there are safe, that we are consulting with the Iraqi security forces, that we're getting a better assessment of what's on the ground, and that we're recognizing the dangers of ISIL over the long term and developing the kinds of comprehensive counterterrorism strategies that we're going to need to deal with this issue. And that's going to involve some short-term responses to make sure that ISIL is not obtaining capacity to endanger

us directly or our allies and partners. But it also is going to require some long-term strategies as well.

Because part of what we've with respect to ISIL is a broader trend that I talked about at West Point: a—rather than a single network, a discreet network of terrorists, this fluid combination of hardened terrorists, disaffected local leadership. And where there's vacuums, they're filling it and creating the potential for serious danger for all concerned.

So, all right? Thank you very much.

Iran's Role in Iraq and the Middle East

Q. What about Iran, Mr. President? What about Iran, Mr. President? Any words on what you're willing to do——

The President. With respect——

Q. ——and are you also willing to work with them?

The President. Our view is that Iran can play a constructive role if it is helping to send the same message to the Iraqi Government that we're sending, which is that Iraq only holds together if it's inclusive and that—if the interests of Sunni, Shia, and Kurd are all respected. If Iran is coming in solely as an armed force on behalf of the Shia, and if it is framed in that fashion, then that probably worsens the situation and the prospect for government formation that would actually be constructive over the long term.

Q. What's your sense of that right now?

The President. Well, I think that just as Iraq's leaders have to make decisions, I think Iran has heard from us. We've indicated to them that it is important for them to avoid steps that might encourage the kind of sectarian splits that might lead to civil war.

And the one thing that I think is—has to be emphasized, we have deep differences with Iran across the board on a whole host of issues. Obviously, what's happened in Syria in part is the result of Iran coming in hot and heavy on one side. And Iran obviously should consider the fact that if it is—its view of the region is solely through sectarian frames, they could find themselves fighting in a whole lot of places. And that's probably not good for the Iranian economy or the Iranian people over the long term either. I suspect there are folks in Iran who recognize that. A Iraq in chaos on their borders is probably not in their interests. But old habits die hard, and we'll have to see whether they can take what I think would be a more promising path over the next several days. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:32 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; and Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives Usama Abdul Aziz Al-Najafi. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks on Presenting the Medal of Honor to Corporal William Kyle Carpenter

June 19, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Please be seated. On behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House.

The man you see before you today, Corporal William Kyle Carpenter, should not be alive today. Hand grenades are one of the most awful weapons of war. They only weigh about a pound, but they're packed with TNT. If one lands nearby, you have mere seconds to seek cover. When it detonates, its fragments shoot out in every direction. And even at a distance, that spray of shrapnel can inflict devastating injuries on the human body. Up close, it's almost certain death.

But we are here because this man, this United States marine, faced down that terrible explosive power, that unforgiving force, with his own body—willingly and deliberately—to protect a fellow marine. When that grenade exploded, Kyle Carpenter's body took the brunt

of the blast. His injuries were called "catastrophic." It seemed as if he was going to die. While being treated, he went into cardiac arrest, and three times, he flatlined. Three times, doctors brought him back.

Along with his parents, who call Kyle's survival "our miracle," we thank God they did. Because with that singular act of courage, Kyle, you not only saved your brother-in-arms, you displayed a heroism in the blink of an eye that will inspire for generations, valor worthy of our Nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor.

Now, Kyle and I have actually met before. During his long recovery at Walter Reed, he and some of our other wounded warriors came to the White House to celebrate the World Series Champion St. Louis Cardinals. Some of you may be aware, I am a White Sox fan. [*Laughter*] Kyle likes the Braves. So it was a tough day for both of us. [*Laughter*]

But after the ceremony, Michelle and I had the chance to meet Kyle. And at the time, he was still undergoing surgeries. But he was up, and he was walking, and he was working his way toward being independent again, towards the man you see here today. And, Kyle, the main message we want to send is, welcome back. We are so proud to have you here.

We just spent some time not just with Kyle, but also with his wonderful family. And anybody who has had a chance to get to know this young man knows you're not going to get a better example of what you want in an American or a marine. Despite all the attention, he's still the same humble guy from Gilbert, South Carolina, population of about 600; I guess today it's only population 590-something. [*Laughter*]

These days he's also at the University of South Carolina, "just a normal college student," he says, cheering for the Gamecocks. You'll notice that Kyle doesn't hide his scars; he's proud of them and the service that they represent. And now, he tells me this, and so I'm just quoting him. He says, "The girls definitely like them." [*Laughter*] So he's kind of—he's working an angle on this thing. [*Laughter*] I wasn't sure whether I was supposed to say fire. Kyle says about Nick, "He was my point that in front of mom. [*Laughter*] But there's a quote there.

In addition to our many distinguished guests, I want to welcome those who made this man the marine that he is: Kyle's father Jim, Kyle's lovely mom Robin, and his brothers Price and Peyton, one of whom is going to be joining Kyle at South Carolina, another Gamecock, and then we've got one who's going to be at the Citadel. We also have Kyle's Marine brothers who served with him in Afghanistan and through his recovery. And I also want to welcome the members of the Medal of Honor Society, whose ranks Kyle joins today.

Kyle and his fellow Marines served during the surge of forces that I ordered to Afghanistan early in my Presidency. Their mission was to drive the Taliban out of their strongholds, protect the Afghan people, and give them a chance to reclaim their communities.

Kyle and his platoon were in Helmand Province in Marja, pushing their way across open fields and muddy canals, bearing their heavy packs even as it could heat up to 115 degrees. In one small village, they turned a dusty compound into their base. The insurgents nearby gave their answer with sniper fire and automatic weapon fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

And that morning, Kyle said, "our alarm clock was AK–47 fire." Some of the men were by their bunks, gearing up for another day. Some were heating up their MREs. Some were in makeshift ops centers—a simple mud building—planning the day's patrols. And up on the roof, behind a circle of sandbags, two marines manned their posts: Kyle and Lance Corporal Nicholas Eufrazio.

The compound started to take fire. Seeking cover, Kyle and Nick laid down low on their backs behind those sandbags. And then, the grenade landed with a thud, its pin already pulled. It was about to explode.

And Kyle has no memory of what happened next. What we do know is that there on that rooftop, he wasn't just with a fellow marine, he was with his best friend. Kyle and Nick had met in training. In Afghanistan, they patrolled together, day and night, a friendship forged in man, and I loved him like a brother."

When the grenade landed, other marines in the compound looked up and saw it happen. Kyle tried to stand. He lunged forward toward that grenade, and then he disappeared into the blast. Keep in mind, at the time, Kyle was just 21 years old. But in that instant, he fulfilled those words of Scripture: "Greater love hath no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friends."

They found Kyle lying face down, directly over the blast area. His helmet was riddled with holes. His gear was melted. Part of his Kevlar vest was blown away. One of the doctors who treated him later said Kyle was "literally wounded from the top of his head to his feet."

And for a moment, Kyle was still conscious. His eyes were open, but he couldn't see. Kyle remembers, "Everything went white." And yet, even then, his thoughts were not of himself. One of the marines who was there remembers how Kyle kept asking one question, and that was whether Nick was okay. And then, as Kyle's strength drained away, he sensed the end was coming. So according to Kyle's memories: "My last thought [was to] make peace with God. I asked for His forgiveness. I was trying to make the best and most of my last few seconds here on Earth."

The Medal of Honor is presented for gallantry on the battlefield. But today we also recognize Kyle Carpenter for his valor since, in the hard fight for recovery. Eventually, Kyle woke up after 5 weeks in a coma. I want you to consider what Kyle has endured just to stand here today: more than 2½ years in the hospital, grueling rehabilitation, brain surgery to remove shrapnel from his head, nearly 40 surgeries to repair a collapsed lung, fractured fingers, a shattered right arm broken in more than 30 places, multiple skin grafts. He has a new prosthetic eye, a new jaw, new teeth—and one hell of a smile. [*Laughter*]

And Kyle is the first to give credit elsewhere. His doctors at Bethesda, he says, "put me back together well." Today is also a reminder that in past wars, somebody with injuries as severe as Kyle's probably wouldn't have survived. So many of our wounded warriors from today's wars are alive not just because of remarkable advances in technology, but primarily because of the extraordinary dedication and skill of our military and our VA medical professionals.

So we need to keep doing everything we can in our power to give our wounded warriors and those who treat them the support that they need. And I think this is a wonderful opportunity to ask doctors Debra Malone and Lauren Greer and the rest of Kyle's medical team who are here to please stand. I see their amazing work every time I visit Bethesda, every time I visited Walter Reed. It's pretty rare where you've got a job where you just know you're doing God's work every single day. And they do an incredible job, so thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you. Thank you for the miracles you work for our wounded troops and veterans.

Now, Kyle says he'll wear this medal for all who serve and for those who didn't make it back and for those who struggle still. So today we also honor two members of his team who made the ultimate sacrifice in that deployment: Kyle's friends Lance Corporal Timothy M. Jackson of Corbin, Kentucky, and Lance Corporal Dakota R. Huse of Greenwood, Louisiana.

And our thoughts are also with the marine who Kyle saved that day, his brother, Nick. I had the opportunity to meet Nick as well nearly 2 years after the blast on one of my visits to Walter Reed. Nick also suffered grievous wounds. As a result of traumatic brain injury, he couldn't speak for more than a year. He also endured multiple surgeries. Today, his recovery continues. He lives at home with his family in Plymouth, Massachusetts, where he is watching this ceremony. So, Nick, on behalf of all of us, I want you to know we honor your sacrifice as well. Your perseverance is an inspiration. And just as Kyle was there for you, our Nation will be there for you and your family as you grow stronger in the years ahead.

If any of our wounded warriors seek an example—let me amend that—if any American seeks a model of the strength and resilience that define us as a people, including this newest 9/11 generation, I want you to consider Kyle.

After everything he's been through, he skis, he snowboards, he's jumped from a plane, with a parachute, thankfully. [*Laughter*] He trudged through a 6-mile Mud Run, completed the Marine Corps Marathon, says he wants to do a triathlon. He's a motivational speaker, an advocate for his fellow wounded warriors. He's thinking about majoring in psychology so he can use his own experiences to help others. He got stellar grades. And by the way, he's only 24 years old and says, "I am just getting started."

In other words, Kyle is a shining example of what our Nation needs to encourage: these veterans who come home and then use their incredible skills and talents to keep our country strong. And we can all learn from Kyle's example.

As we prepare for the reading of the citation, I'd like to close with his own words, a message, I think, for every American: "It took a life-changing event to get me to truly appreciate the precious and amazing life I have been blessed with. Please take it from me, enjoy every day to the fullest, don't take life too seriously, always try to make it count, appreciate the small and simple things, be kind and help others, let the ones you love always know you love them, and when things get hard, trust there is a bigger plan and that you will be stronger for it." Pretty good message.

Corporal William Kyle Carpenter should not be alive today, but the fact that he is gives us reason to trust that there is indeed a bigger plan. So God bless you, Kyle. God bless all who serve and protect the precious and amazing life that we are blessed with. May God continue to bless and keep strong the United States of America. Semper Fi.

[*At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Timothy J. Myers, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citation. The President then presented the medal, assisted by Maj. Steven M. Schreiber, USMC, Marine Corps Aide to the President. Following the presentation, Rear Adm. Margaret G. Kibben, USN, Chaplain of the U.S. Marine Corps, said a prayer.*]

Well, that brings us to the conclusion of this ceremony, but not the reception and party. And so I want to thank everybody again for being here, especially Kyle's wonderful family and his parents. And I understand that the food here at the White House is pretty good—[*laughter*]—so I already told Kyle's brothers that they should be chowing down. But that goes for everybody else as well. And I think the drinks are free. I don't know what—although it's still early in the afternoon. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody. Let's big—give one more round of applause to our latest Medal of Honor winner, Kyle Carpenter.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Col. Debra L. Malone, USAF, trauma research director, and Capt. Lauren T. Greer, general surgeon, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citation.

Statement on the Investiture of King Felipe VI of Spain
June 19, 2014

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate His Majesty King Felipe VI on the occasion of his investiture as King of Spain. We are grateful to King Juan Carlos I for his friendship and leadership in guiding Spain's democracy and deepening the transatlantic relationship.

Spain is a valued ally of the United States, and we share strong ties, steeped in history. I look forward to working closely with King Felipe VI and continuing to strengthen this bond in the years to come. As Spain celebrates this transition and looks ahead to the future, the American people celebrate along with the people of Spain.

Statement on the Observance of Juneteenth
June 19, 2014

On this day in 1865, more than 2 years after President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, word finally reached Galveston, Texas, that the slaves there were free.

Juneteenth marked an important moment in the life of our Nation. But it was only the beginning of a long and difficult struggle for equal rights and equal treatment under the law. This year, as we also mark the 50th Anniversary of Freedom Summer, we honor those who continued to fight for equality and opportunity for Americans of every race and every background, and we recommit ourselves to the unending work of perfecting our Union.

Statement on the Massachusetts Legislature's Passage of Legislation To Raise the Minimum Wage
June 19, 2014

I commend the Massachusetts Legislature for standing up for working men and women in the Commonwealth and taking action toward raising the State's minimum wage to $11 per hour by 2017. Under the leadership of Governor Patrick, Massachusetts joins a growing coalition of States, cities, and counties that are doing part to make sure no American working full time has to support a family in poverty.

I look forward to Governor Patrick signing this bill into law soon, and I urge Congress to follow Massachusetts' lead and lift wages for 28 million Americans by raising the Federal minimum wage to $10.10.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Disposition of Russian Highly Enriched Uranium
June 19, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the emergency declared in Executive Order 13617 of June 25, 2012, with respect to the disposition of Russian highly enriched uranium is to continue in effect beyond June 25, 2014.

The risk of nuclear proliferation created by the accumulation of a large volume of weapons-usable fissile material in the territory of the Russian Federation continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13617 with respect to the disposition of Russian highly enriched uranium.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
June 19, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister John P. Key of New Zealand and an Exchange With Reporters
June 20, 2014

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure to welcome my good friend, Prime Minister Key, to the Oval Office. The last time I saw him, we were on a golf course in Hawaii with his son. And although we will not divulge the scores, it is important to note that John's son Max can outdrive both of us by a substantial amount.

During the course of my Presidency and John's Prime Ministership, I think it's fair to say that the U.S.-New Zealand relationship has never been stronger. We share values, we have enormously strong people-to-people relationships, we have excellent commercial ties, and we have increasing consultations and relationships between our militaries. And all of those components have deepened during the course of our tenures here.

We had an excellent conversation about many regional issues, as well as some broader issues and challenges. We spent a lot of time talking about trade and commerce in the Asia-Pacific region, and the United States and New Zealand were two of the initial members of the TPP coalition that is trying to create a high-standards trade regime in the most dynamic and fastest growing part of the world. New Zealand—as a country with a small population, but really good products—has a great interest in making sure that markets are open and rules of the road are abided by when it comes to trade.

And so New Zealand has been a great partner on that process, and we discussed a timeline whereby before the end of the year we're able to get a document that can create jobs both in New Zealand and the United States and the other countries that are participating and expand wealth for all parties concerned. And our hope is, is that by the time we see each other again in November, when I travel to Asia, that we should have something that we have consulted with Congress about that the public can take a look at and we can make a forceful argument to go ahead and close the deal. But we've got a lot of work to do between now and then.

We had a good discussion about some of the other issues that are facing the Asia-Pacific region: the threat of North Korea and the need to continue to press on denuclearization there; the relationship with China, where we both agree that we welcome China's peaceful rise, and at the same time, we discussed my very strong view that it is important for us to be able to resolve disputes like maritime disputes in accordance with international law and encourage all parties concerned to maintain a legal framework for resolving issues, as opposed to possible escalation that could have an impact on navigation and commerce.

We had a good conversation about climate change, where New Zealand, I think, has been an excellent partner with us and other economies, recognizing that this is a threat that none of us can solve individually, that we're going to have to work on together. And so we discussed our plans for putting forward robust action in 2015 with the upcoming Paris conference.

And we discussed the state of the world economy. New Zealand has been doing very well, in part, as John explained, because of the rebuilding after the devastating earthquake that had happened there, but also because of the outstanding growth in its agricultural sector where it's one of the few countries that maybe can match us when it comes to agricultural productivity and the excellence of our products. But I think we share the view that it's important to sustain economic growth worldwide and worldwide demand at a time when Europe, for example, is still having challenges. And that's part of why something like the Trans-Pacific Partnership can be so important.

And finally, we discussed some core security issues. I'm proud that my home—my original home State of Hawaii is going to be welcoming a New Zealand ship coming into port for the first time in a couple of decades. And we're very proud of that. I'm sure you'll get a good

welcome when they come. And although New Zealand obviously is a small country with a small Armed Forces, the cooperation that we have on intelligence issues, New Zealand's excellent efforts when it comes to training and participating in peacekeeping operations makes it an invaluable partner. So we're very appreciative of that.

So overall, it was wonderful to see John and his delegation. And I indicated to him that I would love to come to New Zealand because I hear it's really nice. [*Laughter*] And I know the people are nice, because I've had a chance to meet them. So we're going to be working with my scheduler to see what I can come up with if not this year, certainly before the end of my Presidency. So, welcome. Thank you.

Prime Minister Key. Well, let me be brief. Mr. President, firstly, thank you for the opportunity to be in the White House. Look, I think the relationship between New Zealand and the United States continues to go from strength to strength, and that's in large part because of your leadership and your commitment to the New Zealand-U.S. relationship.

New Zealand and the United States have been the two partners, I think, in the Trans-Pacific Partnership that have always believed in a high-quality, comprehensive deal. And I think that that can be achieved. And I think there's more work to be done, but the prize at the end of those negotiations is one that's worth it for both of our economies and for the other 10 partners that would join us. So I think that's a great objective.

We appreciate all the things you do, the leadership you show around the world. We know that's it's never an easy day in the office here in the Oval Office.

And lastly, I think we had a very good discussion about maritime security. And certainly, New Zealand holds very strongly to the view that everyone has to observe the rule of international law, the law of the sea. And peace and stability in every region of the world is important. And it's important to our two countries. So that's probably enough for me. But thank you very much for having us here again.

The President. Excellent. Thank you very much, everybody.

New Zealand-U.S. Relations

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. We just love having New Zealand as a partner in general on a whole range of issues.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 23.

Statement on World Refugee Day
June 20, 2014

Today I join people around the world in commemorating World Refugee Day. It is an opportunity to honor the resilience of those who flee violence and persecution and the dedication of those who help them.

The forces that shatter communities and uproot their residents are difficult to tame. This year we mark a grim milestone. Over 51 million people are now refugees, asylum seekers, or internally displaced persons, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. That is more than at any time since World War II.

Nearly half of all Syrians—45 percent—have been driven from their homes. A quarter of them—more than 2.8 million—have become refugees in neighboring countries. Conflicts in the Central African Republic and South Sudan have each forced over a million people to flee. In just the past few days, turmoil gripping Iraq has displaced hundreds of thousands and threatens many more.

Refugee crises reveal what is worst and best about us. The huts set on fire, the apartment buildings flattened, the bullets sprayed at innocent civilians show the depths of our capacity for hatred and callousness. But those who aid

and protect refugees demonstrate the opposite: our potential for valor and compassion.

The United States provides more humanitarian assistance to refugees than any other nation. In the last year alone, the generosity of the American people and the dedication of those who deliver food, medicine, shelter, and other emergency assistance have helped to save hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of lives.

Our commitment does not end overseas. Some refugees simply cannot return home because the risk of violence and persecution is too great. The U.S. admits more refugees for permanent resettlement than any other nation. Last year, nearly 70,000 came to the United States, and we expect to bring in the same number this year.

The ordeals refugees survive and the aspirations they hold resonate with us as Americans. This country was built by people who fled oppression and war, leapt at opportunity, and worked day and night to remake themselves in this new land. The refugees who arrive in the United States today continue this tradition, bringing fresh dreams and energy and renewing the qualities that help forge our national identity and make our country strong.

Statement on the Establishment of the United States Conference of Mayors My Brother's Keeper Task Force
June 20, 2014

I thank Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson and the U.S. Conference of Mayors for their action today to establish a Mayors Task Force dedicated to the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative. "My Brother's Keeper" is an all-hands-on-deck effort to make sure every young person—especially boys and young men of color—can reach their potential. Through this Task Force, mayors will work to expand universal early childhood programs, promote public-private partnerships that help create more summer jobs, increase and build on existing mentorship programs, and eliminate suspensions and expulsions in preschool and other early learning settings. I commend these mayors, representing cities across the Nation, for making these issues a priority in their communities, and I look forward to working with them to expand opportunity and improve the odds for every child in America.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to North Korea
June 20, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to North Korea that was declared in Executive Order (E.O.) 13466 of June 26, 2008, expanded in scope in E.O. 13551 of August 30, 2010, and addressed further in E.O. 13570 of April 18, 2011, is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2014.

The existence and risk of proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material on the Korean Peninsula, and the actions and policies of the Government of North Korea that destabilize the Korean Peninsula and imperil U.S. Armed Forces, allies, and trading partners in

the region, continue to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to North Korea.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
June 20, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
June 21, 2014

Hi, everybody. As President, my top priority is rebuilding an economy where everybody who works hard has the chance to get ahead.

That's what I'll spend some time talking about on Monday at the White House Summit on Working Families. We're bringing together business leaders and workers to talk about the challenges that working parents face every day and how we can address them together.

Take paid family leave. Many jobs don't offer adequate leave to care for a new baby or an ailing parent, so workers can't afford to be there when their family needs them the most. That's wrong. And it puts us way behind the times. Only three countries in the world report that they don't offer paid maternity leave. Three. And the United States is one of them. It's time to change that. A few States have acted on their own to give workers paid family leave, but this should be available to everyone, because all Americans should be able to afford to care for a family member in need.

Childcare is another challenge. Most working families I know can't afford thousands a year for childcare, but often, that's what it costs. That leaves parents scrambling just to make sure their kids are safe while they're at work. Forget about giving them the high-quality early childhood education that helps the kid succeed in life.

Then there's the issue of flexibility: the ability to take a few hours off for a parent-teacher conference or to work from home when your child is sick. Most workers want it, but not enough of them have it. What's more, it not only makes workers happier; studies show that flexibility can make workers more productive and reduce worker turnover and absenteeism. And that's good for business.

At a time when women make up about half of America's workforce, outdated workplace policies that make it harder for mothers to work hold our entire economy back. But these aren't just problems for women. Men also care about who's watching their kids. They're rearranging their schedules to make it to soccer games and school plays. Lots of sons help care for aging parents. And plenty of fathers would love to be home for their new baby's first weeks in the world.

In fact, in a new study, nearly half of all parents—women and men—report that they've said no to a job, not because they didn't want it, but because it would be too hard on their families. When that many talented, hard-working people are forced to choose between work and family, something's wrong. Other countries are making it easier for people to have both. We should too if we want American businesses to compete and win in the global economy.

Family leave, childcare, flexibility—these aren't frills, they're basic needs. They shouldn't be bonuses, they should be the bottom line.

The good news is, some businesses are embracing family-friendly policies, because they know it's key to attracting and retaining talented employees. And I'm going to keep highlighting the businesses that do. Because I take this personally. I take it personally as the son and grandson of some strong women who worked hard to support my sister and me and as the husband of a brilliant woman who struggled to balance work and has raised our girls when my job often kept me away and as the father of two beautiful young ladies, whom I

want to be there for as much as I can and who I hope will be able to have families and careers of their own one day.

We know from our history that our economy grows best from the middle out, that our country does better when everybody participates, when everyone's talents are put to use, when we all have a fair shot. That's the America I believe in. And that's the America I'll keep fighting for every day.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2 p.m. on June 20 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on June 21. In the address, the President referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 20, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 21. Together with the transcript, the Office of the Press Secretary released a Council of Economic Advisers report, "The Economics of Paid and Unpaid Leave."

Remarks at the White House Summit on Working Families
June 23, 2014

The President. Thank you. This crowd looks fired up. All right, everybody, have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. You look like you've been busy.

Audience members. Yes!

Audience member. We've been waiting on you.

The President. I know that's right. I know that's right. [*Laughter*] Good afternoon, everybody. Have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. Take a——

Audience member. I love you, Mr. President.

The President. I love you back. [*Applause*] I do. Well, welcome to the White House Summit on Working Families. And thanks to all of you for joining us. I know that for most of you, you are taking time off of work or family, or both, to be here. And I know that's a sacrifice. And I know just juggling schedules can be tough. And in fact, that's one of the reasons that we are here today.

I want to thank our cohosts, Secretary of Labor Tom Perez—give him a big round of applause—as well as Neera Tanden and everyone at the Center for American Progress for the great work that they did. Thanks as well to all the Members of Congress who are participating, especially Nancy Pelosi and the members of the Democratic Women's Working Group. And a long-time friend and champion of families and women and veterans, Connie Milstein; we could not have pulled this off without Connie's great assistance, so we want to thank Connie.

So I just walked over to Chipotle's for lunch. [*Laughter*] I caused a lot of havoc, as you might expect. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Burrito bowl!

The President. It had been a while since I had the burrito bowl, and it was good. [*Laughter*] And I went there with four new buddies of mine. One of them is a father of a 4-year-old and a 2-month-old who has worked with his wife to come up with a flexible plan where he works 3 or 4 days a week. She works 3 or 4 days a week. And the reason is because, as Roger put it, he thinks it's important that he is able to bond with these kids just as much as his wife is.

Lisa, you just heard from, who had twins who were prematurely born. And because her company was supportive, she was able to not just thrive and watch her kids grow up, but she's also been able to be promoted and continue to succeed in her company without being on a slower track while maintaining that life-family balance, which is terrific—[*applause*]—worth applauding.

Shirley Young from New York is—works at a nursing home, and she's got older children. And she was most interested in talking about the fact that when her son, it was discovered, had curvature of the spine, she had health care that she could count on. Otherwise, there was no way that she could deal with it. And her benefits on the job were good enough that she

could use some vacation time when he was able—when he had to go to the doctor.

And then Shelby from Denver—[*applause*]—Shelby has got a little fan club here. Shelby talked about the fact that on her job, it's been a little more challenging. Her kids are older, and she's going back to school. And it is wonderful that she is actually now taking some classes with her children and they're helping explain math to her. [*Laughter*] On the other hand, she's also got an aging parent. And when he had to go to the doctor, they don't have a policy of paid family leave. And since it's hard making ends meet in the first place, her dad had to end up getting on a bus for eye surgery and come back on his own, because she couldn't afford to take the time off.

Now, each of these folks come from different parts of the country. They have different occupations, different income levels. And yet what bound all of us together was a recognition that work gives us a sense of place and dignity, as well as income. And it is critically important, but family is also the bedrock of our lives, and we don't want a society in which folks are having to make a choice between those two things. And there are better decisions that we can make and there are not-so-good decisions that we can make as a society to support this balance between work and family.

Most of us—most of our days consist of work, family, and not much else. And those two spheres are constantly interacting with each other. When we're with our family, sometimes we're thinking about work; when we're at work, we're thinking about family. That's a pretty universal experience. It's true when you are President of the United States. [*Laughter*]

Now, I am lucky that my daughters were a bit older by the time I became President, so I never had to meet a world leader with Cheerios stuck to my pants. [*Laughter*] That has not happened. And I'm also lucky because we live above the store, so to speak. [*Laughter*] I have a very short commute. [*Laughter*] And as a consequence, we've been able to organize ourselves to have dinner with Michelle and the girls almost every night. And that's pretty much the first time we've been able to do that in our lives.

But before I moved into the White House, I was away a lot, sometimes with work, sometimes with campaigning. Michelle was working full time and was at home with the responsibility all too often of dealing with everything that the girls needed. And so we understand how lucky we are now, because there was a big chunk of time when we were doing what so many of you have to deal with every day, and that is, figuring out how do we make this whole thing work.

A lot of Americans are not as lucky as we have been. It is hard sometimes just to get by. Our businesses have created jobs for 51 consecutive months—9.4 [million]* new jobs in all. But we all know somebody out there who is still looking for work. And there are a whole lot of people who are working harder than ever, but can't seem to get ahead and pay all the bills at the end of the month. Despite the fact that our economy has grown and those of us at the very top have done very well, the average wage, the average income hasn't gone up for 15 years in any meaningful way. And that means that relative to 15 years ago, a lot of families just aren't that much better off. And the sacrifices they make for their families go beyond just missing family dinner.

You look at something like workplace flexibility. This is so important to our family—this was so important to our family when I was away, because if Malia or Sasha got sick, or the babysitter did not show up, it was Michelle who got the call. And fortunately, she had an employer who understood if she needed to leave work in the middle of the day or change her schedule suddenly. In fact, actually, when she applied for the job, she brought Sasha, who was then about 6 months, in her car seat into the interview. She made—just to kind of explain, this is what you will be dealing with if you hire me. [*Laughter*]

And so they signed up for that. And that flexibility made all the difference to our

* White House correction.

families. But a lot of working moms and dads can't do that. They don't have the leverage. They're not being recruited necessarily where they can dictate terms of employment. And as a consequence, if they need to bring their mom to the doctor or take an afternoon off to see their kid's school play, it would mean them losing income that they can't afford to lose. And even when working from home from time to time is doable, it's often not an option, even though studies show that flexibility makes workers happier and helps companies lower turnover and raise productivity.

The same goes with paid family leave. A lot of jobs do not offer it. So when a new baby arrives or an aging parent gets sick, workers have to make painful decisions about whether they can afford to be there when their families need them the most. Many women can't even get a paid day off to give birth. Now, that's a pretty low bar. [*Laughter*] You would think—[*laughter*]—that that we should be able to take care of. [*Laughter*]

For many hourly workers, taking just a few days off can mean losing their job. And even though unpaid family leave is available, if you can't pay the bills already, the idea of taking a couple days off unpaid may mean you can't make the mortgage payment or the rent payment at the end of the month.

Or look at childcare. In most countries, it costs—or in most parts of the country, it costs thousands of dollars a year. In fact, in 31 States, decent childcare costs more than in-State college tuition—in 31 States, in more than half the States. I recently got a letter from a woman in Minnesota whose kids' preschool is so expensive, it costs more than her monthly mortgage payment. Now, she's made a determination to make that sacrifice for her kids, but a lot of working families can't make that sacrifice. And by the way, there are other countries that know how to do childcare well. I mean, this isn't rocket science.

Or look at the minimum wage. Low-wage occupations disproportionately represented by women. Nearly 28 million Americans would benefit if we raised the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. And we're not just talking about young people on their first job. The average worker who would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage is 35 years old. Many have kids; a majority are women. And right now many full-time minimum wage workers are not making enough to keep their children out of poverty.

So these are just a few of the challenges that working parents face. And every day, I hear from parents all across the country. They are doing everything right. They are working hard, they are living responsibly, they are taking care of their children, they're participating in their community. And these letters can be heartbreaking, because at the end of the day, it doesn't feel like they're getting ahead. And all too often, it feels like they're slipping behind. And a lot of the time, they end up blaming themselves, thinking, if I just work a little harder—if I plan a little bit better, if I sleep a little bit less, if I stretch every dollar a little bit farther—maybe I can do it. And that thought may have crossed the minds of some of the folks here from time to time.

Part of the purpose of this summit is to make clear, you're not alone. Because here's the thing: These problems are not typically the result of poor planning or too little diligence on the parts of moms or dads, and they cannot just be fixed by working harder or being an even better parent. All too often, they are the results of outdated policies and old ways of thinking. Family leave, childcare, workplace flexibility, a decent wage—these are not frills, they are basic needs. They shouldn't be bonuses. They should be part of our bottom line as a society. That's what we're striving towards.

Parents who work full time should earn enough to pay the bills, and they should be able to head off to work every day knowing that their children are in good hands. Workers who give their all should know that if they need a little flexibility, they can have it, because their employers understand that it's hard to be productive if you've got a sick kid at home or a childcare crisis.

Talented, hard-working people should be able to say yes to a promotion or a great new opportunity without worrying about the price

that their family will pay. There was a new poll by Nielsen's that found that nearly half of all working parents say they have turned down a job not because they didn't want it, but because it would put too much of a burden on their families. Half. When that many members of our workforce are forced to choose between a job and their family, something's wrong.

And here's a critical point: All too often, these issues are thought of as women's issues, which, I guess, means you can kind of scoot them aside a little bit. At a time when women are nearly half of our workforce, among our most skilled workers, are the primary breadwinners in more families than ever before, anything that makes life harder for women makes life harder for families and makes life harder for children. When women succeed, America succeeds, so there's no such thing as a women's issue. [*Applause*] There's no such thing as a women's issue. This is a family issue and an American issue. These are commonsense issues. [*Applause*] These are commonsense issues.

This is about you too, men. [*Laughter*] Men care about having high-quality childcare. Dads rearrange their schedules to make it to teacher's meetings and school plays, just like moms. Although, somebody pointed out to me—this is a useful insight—that when dads say, yes, I've got to leave early to go to the parent-teacher's conference, everybody in the office says, oh, isn't that nice. [*Laughter*] And then, when women do it, everybody is all, like, is she really committed to the job? Right? So there can be a double standard there. But sons help care for aging parents. A whole lot of fathers would love to be home for their new baby's first weeks in the world.

People ask me what do I love most about being President, and it's true Air Force One is on the list. [*Laughter*] The Truman Balcony is a really nice view. [*Laughter*] But one of the—I was telling folks the other day that one of the best perks about being President is anybody will hand you their baby. They—here. [*Laughter*]

So I get this baby fix, like, two or three times a week, where I'm—[*laughter*]. But the reason it's so powerful is because I remember taking the night shift when Malia was born and when Sasha was born and being up at 2 in the morning changing diapers and burping them and singing to them and reading them stories, and watching SportsCenter once in a while—[*laughter*]—which I thought was good for their development. [*Laughter*] It was. We want them to be well rounded. [*Laughter*]

But the point is, I was lucky enough to be able to take some time off so that I was there for the 2 a.m. feeding and the soothing and just getting to know them and making sure they knew me. And that bond is irreplaceable. And I want every father and every child to have that opportunity. And—but that requires a society that makes it easier for us to give folks that opportunity.

So the bottom line is, 21st-century families deserve 21st-century workplaces. And our economy demands them, because it's going to help us compete. It's going to help us lead. And that means paid family leave, especially paid parental leave. There is only one developed country in the world that does not offer paid maternity leave, and that is us. And that is not the list you want to be on by your lonesome. It's time to change that, because all Americans should be able to afford to care for their families.

It means high-quality early education. We know that the investment we make in those early years pays off over a child's entire lifetime. And these programs give parents a great place to know that their kids are thriving while they're at work. Other countries know how to do this. If France can figure this out, we can figure it out. [*Laughter*] We can figure it out. All our kids need to benefit from that early enrichment.

It means treating pregnant workers fairly, because too many are still forced to choose between their health and their job. Right now, if you're pregnant, you could potentially get fired for taking too many bathroom breaks—clearly from a boss who has never been pregnant—or forced on unpaid leave. That makes no sense. Congress should pass the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act without delay.

Now, speaking of Congress, by the way—[*laughter*].

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, don't boo, vote. As long as Congress refuses to act on these policies, we're going to need you to raise your voices. We need you to tell Congress don't talk about how you support families, actually support families. Don't talk the talk, we want you to walk the walk.

In the meantime, if Congress will not act, we're going to need mayors to act. We'll need Governors and State legislators to act. We need CEOs to act. And I promise you, you will have a President who will take action to support working families.

The good news is, you don't have to do it alone, and I don't have to do it alone. Now, that's part of the purpose of this summit, is to recognize that there's all kinds of exciting stuff going on around the country. We just have to make sure that we lift up conversations that are taking place at the kitchen table every single day. Some businesses are already taking the lead, knowing that family-friendly policies are good business practices. That's how you keep talented employees. That's how you build loyalty and inspire your workers to go the extra mile for your company.

Some of those businesses are represented here today. So JetBlue, for example, has a flexible, work-from-home plan in place for its customer service representatives. They found it led to happier and more productive employees and it lowered their costs, which translated into higher profits and lower ticket prices for their customers. It was good business.

In 2007, Google realized that women were leaving the company at twice the rate that men left, and one of the reasons was that the maternity leave policy wasn't competitive enough. So they increased paid leave for new parents—moms and dads—to 5 months. And that helped to cut the rate of women leaving the company in half. Good business sense.

Cisco estimates that by letting their employees telecommute, they save more than $275 million each year. They say it's the main reason why they're rated one of the best places to work in America.

So it's easy to see how policies like this make for better places to work. There's also a larger economic case for it. The strength of our economy rests on whether we're getting the most out of our Nation's talent, whether we're making it possible for every citizen to contribute to our growth and prosperity. We do better when we field an entire team, not just part of a team.

And the key to staying competitive in the global economy is your workforce, is your talent. Right now too many folks are on the sidelines: They have the desire and the capacity to work, but they're held back by one obstacle or another. So it's our job to remove those obstacles: help working parents, improve job training, improve early childhood education, invest in better infrastructure so people are getting to work safely. Just about everything I do as President is to make sure that we're not leaving any of our Nation's talent behind. That's what this summit is all about.

Audience member. Working families love you, Mr. President.

The President. Well, thank you. [*Laughter*] So we're seeing businesses set a good example. We've got States who are setting a good example. California, Rhode Island, New Jersey all gave workers paid family leave. Connecticut offers paid sick days, and so does New York City. Since I asked Congress to raise the minimum wage last year—they've been a little slow, shockingly, but 13 States have taken steps to raise it on their own. In my State of the Union Address this year, I asked mayors and Governors and CEOs, do what you can to raise your workers' wages, and a lot of them are. A lot of them are doing it.

Because even if Republicans in Congress refuse to budge on this issue this year, everybody knows America deserves a raise, including Republican voters out there. There are a lot of them who support it. And I've said I will work with anybody, Democrat or Republican, to increase opportunities for American workers. And Nancy Pelosi is ready to work.

And we should. Now, many of these issues, they're not partisan until they get to Washing-

ton. Back home, folks sitting around the kitchen table, this isn't partisan. Nobody says, well, I don't know, I'm not sure whether the Republican platform agrees with paid family leave. They're thinking, I could really use a couple of paid days off to take care of dad, regardless of what their party affiliation is.

So even as we're waiting for Congress, whenever I can act on my own, I'm going to. That's why we raised the minimum wage for employees of Federal contractors. Nobody who cooks our troops' meals or washes their dishes should have to live in poverty. That's a disgrace. That's why I ordered Tom Perez, our Secretary of Labor, to review overtime protections for millions of workers to make sure they're getting the pay that they deserve.

That's why I signed an Executive order preventing retaliation against federally contracted workers who share their salary information or raise issues of unequal compensation, because I think if you do the same work, you should get the same pay and you should be able to enforce it, which is why Congress should pass the Paycheck Fairness Act today for all workers and not just federally contracted workers.

And yes, that's why I fought to pass the Affordable Care Act, to give every American access to high-quality affordable care no matter where they work. So far, over 8 million people have enrolled in plans through the ACA. Millions with preexisting conditions have been prevented or have been confident that their insurance companies have not been able to block them from getting health insurance. And by the way, women are no longer charged more for being women.

They're getting the basic care they need, including reproductive care. And millions are now free to take the best job for their families without worrying about losing their health care. Today I'm going to sign a Presidential memorandum directing every agency in the Federal Government to expand access to flexible work schedules and giving employees the right to request those flexible work schedules.

Because whether it's the public sector or the private sector, if there's a way to make our employees more productive and happier, every employer should want to find it. And to help parents trying to get ahead, I'm going to direct my Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, to invest $25 million in helping people who want to enroll in jobs programs, but don't currently have access to the childcare that they need, to enroll in those job training programs. We're going to make it easier for parents to get the training they need to get a good job.

So we're going to do everything we can to create more jobs and more opportunity for Americans. And then, let me just close by saying that I was interviewed in the runup to this on Friday. Somebody asked, well, it's well known that women are more likely to vote for Democrats, now—which I said, women are smarter. This is true.

But they said, so isn't this Working Families Summit political? And I said, no, I take this personally. I was raised by strong women who worked hard to support my sister and me. I saw what it was like for a single mom who was trying to go to school and work at the same time. And I remember her coming home and having to try to fix us dinner, and me saying, are we eating that again? [*Laughter*] And she saying, you know what, buddy, I really don't want to hear anything out of you right now, because I've got to go do some homework after this.

And I remember times where my mom had to take some food stamps to make sure that we had enough nutritious food in the house, and I know what she went through. I know what my grandmother went through, working her way up from a secretary to the vice president of a bank. But she should have run the bank, except she hit a glass ceiling and was training people who would leapfrog ahead of her year after year. I know what that's like. I've seen it.

I take this personally, because I'm the husband of a brilliant woman who struggled to balance work and raising our girls when I was away. And I remember the stresses that were on Michelle, which I'm sure she'll be happy to share with you later today. [*Laughter*] And most of all, I take it personally because I am the father of two unbelievable young ladies. And I want them to be able to have families. And I want them to be able to have careers. And I want them to go

as far as their dreams will take them. And I want a society that supports that.

And I take this personally as the President of the country that built the greatest middle class the world has ever known and inspired people to reach new heights and invent and innovate and drew immigrants from every corner of the world because they understood that no matter what you look like or where you come from, here in America, you can make it. That's the promise of America. That's what we're going to keep on fighting for. That's what you're fighting for. That's what this summit is all about.

Let's go out there and get to work. Thank you, guys. I love you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:51 p.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Neera Tanden, president, Center for American Progress; Constance J. Milstein, founder and board member, Blue Star Families; Ann Arbor, MI, resident Roger Trombley, his wife Shimul Bhuva, and their children Dillon and Maya; Martinsville, NJ, resident Lisa Rumain, who introduced the President, and her children Aiden, Madeline, and Mia; New York City resident Shirley Young; and Denver, CO, resident Shelby Ramirez and her daughters Vanessa and Candy. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. The related memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Western Balkans
June 23, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans that was declared in Executive Order (E.O.) 13219 of June 26, 2001, is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2014.

The threat constituted by the actions of persons engaged in, or assisting, sponsoring, or supporting, (i) extremist violence in the Republic of Macedonia and elsewhere in the Western Balkans region, or (ii) acts obstructing implementation of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia or United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, related to Kosovo, has not been resolved. In addition, E.O. 13219 was amended by E.O. 13304 of May 28, 2003, to take additional steps with respect to acts obstructing implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001 relating to Macedonia.

Because the acts of extremist violence and obstructionist activity outlined in these Executive Orders are hostile to U.S. interests and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to the Western Balkans.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
June 23, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Memorandum on Delegation of Reporting Functions Specified in Section 1206(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014
June 24, 2014

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Delegation of Reporting Functions Specified in Section 1206(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby delegate to the Secretary of State the reporting functions conferred upon the President by section 1206(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113–66).

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This memorandum was not received for publication in the *Federal Register*.

Remarks at the President's Cup Reception
June 24, 2014

The President. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Well, welcome to the White House. And thank you, Mr. Commissioner, for the introduction. I am joined by two of my favorite golf partners, the Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden, and the Speaker of the House, John Boehner. In each instance, they have to give me strokes. My good friend, former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, is with us as well. Where's Ray? He was back here somewhere. Well, okay. He probably went out because it's a nice day to play, and we should actually be outside. [*Laughter*]

Let me make a couple of observations. First of all, I'm not used to seeing these guys in suits. Spieth told me that this is the first suit he's ever bought. [*Laughter*] I'm pointing out Jordan now because they might card him later at the reception. [*Laughter*] We've got some outstanding players, both on the American team and the international team. We've got extraordinary veterans like Ernie Els and Tiger Woods. We've got rookies like Jordan. We've got last year's team captains: Fred Couples from the United States and Nick Price for the world. We've got next year's captains: Jay Haas for the Americans and Nick Price for the world.

Now, last year was the second time I'd been honorary chairman of the President's Cup. The United States won both times. I'm just saying. [*Laughter*] As much as I'd like to take all the credit, the truth is that the U.S. has now beaten the international team in five straight tournaments. Any comment on that, gentleman? [*Laughter*] Okay, I didn't think so. [*Laughter*]

I do want to give the international team credit for keeping things interesting. After 2 days of match play, the U.S. led by only a point. And for those of you at home who don't exactly follow international team golf, that means it was close. But on the morning of day 3, the Americans won four of five matches. And on Sunday, Tiger clinched the victory for the third straight President's Cup. So we are extraordinarily proud of the President's Cup team. We hope our World Cup team takes a page out of their playbook when they take on Germany this Thursday.

I want folks from the international team [to know][*] that we didn't just invite them to rub it in. We want to say thank you to both teams and to the PGA Tour, because as was already

[*] White House correction.

pointed out by the commissioner, the money raised by the President's Cup goes to charities chosen by the players. Last year, you raised more than $5 million, which was a new record.

It happens that philanthropy is a second job for many of these players. Ernie's "Els for Autism" foundation just broke ground on a new children's education center in Florida. And I was mentioning to Ernie that families who have an autistic child couldn't be more thankful for the work that his foundation does and the education and awareness that it's brought about. Zach Johnson, with his foundation, supports a free clinic in Zach's hometown of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Through the "Blessings in a Backpack" program, Jason Dufner and his wife Amanda help make sure the kids in their home State of Alabama have enough to eat. The Tiger Woods Foundation creates learning centers and scholarships to help low-income young people succeed in school. And they're holding a tournament in Maryland this Thursday, and Tiger is getting back to the course early in order to host it in person. So the list goes on.

All of these guys are giving back to their respective communities. And we want to thank them for being such outstanding ambassadors for golf, who use their success not just on the course, but also to support worthy causes off of the course. I want to congratulate Team U.S.A. on another big win. Best of luck as you defend the title in South Korea next year.

And I want to thank Phil Mickelson for giving me an excellent tip on my sand game, because I'm pretty sure I can shave at least two or three strokes if I can just get out of the darn sand. [*Laughter*]

Vice President Joe Biden. Absolutely. I'm confident that's true, Mr. President.

The President. You sure?

Vice President Biden. I'm positive.

The President. Okay. Thank you very much, everybody. Congratulations to the two outstanding teams. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:01 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Timothy W. Finchem, commissioner, Professional Golf Association Tour; and professional golfer Jordan Spieth.

Remarks Honoring the 2013 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion
June 25, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Please have a seat. And welcome to the White House. Welcome to all of you and, most of all, it's great to welcome back the six-time NASCAR Sprint Champion, Mr. Jimmie Johnson. Give him a big round of applause.

We've got some big NASCAR fans here today, including some Members of Congress. And I want to recognize Rick Hendrick, the owner of Hendrick Motorsports, Crew Chief Chad Knaus, as well as Brian France, and the entire NASCAR community.

Now, everybody knows I'm a Chicago guy, and usually, when we do these sports events, I make some crack about how the football team is not as good as the '85 Bears or the basketball team is not as good as the Bulls. But today I can't really say anything because Jimmie Johnson is pretty much the Michael Jordan of NASCAR. [*Laughter*] Like Mike, Jimmie has won six championships in 8 years. He won a few titles, took a 2-year break, decided, you know what, it's not that interesting, and then got back to winning again. And now opposing drivers are saying things like, unfortunately, we're driving during the Jimmie Johnson era. He's the best there ever was.

So these days we've got a lot of kids, all across the country, who want to be like Jimmie, and why shouldn't they? He is the only driver to make the Chase all 10 years it's been in existence. He won his "Six Pack" faster than anybody in NASCAR history. This season, he is chasing his seventh title, which would tie him with Dale Earnhardt and "The King," Richard Petty, for the most ever. And as Chad once said, he can do things with a race car that most mortals cannot. And Chad should know, be-

cause he has been Jimmie's crew chief for 13 years. And while sometimes, the two might sound like an old married couple—[*laughter*]—sniping at each other over the radio, Jimmie knows that without Chad and Rick and the entire team at Hendrick Motorsports, he'd be just another mortal making left turns. And that's why Jimmie brought along the over-the-wall guys from his pit crew to share in today's celebration.

I will say, by the way, I love watching the pit crew. I don't know how you all do it, but it is amazing. And to see the teamwork and athleticism, it's just remarkable. And that's the kind of teamwork and leadership that has made Jimmie a champ not only on the racetrack, but off it.

Since 2006, the Jimmie Johnson Foundation has donated almost $7 million toward grants and resources for public schools and charities like Ronald McDonald House and Habitat for Humanity. He is running a Wellness Challenge to encourage his fans to get healthy and get in shape, which Michelle is very happy about. He met some of our brave wounded warriors before this event and obviously is grateful for their sacrifice.

And this spring, Jimmie joined in the Ban Bossy campaign to help encourage leadership among young girls. Jimmie caught some flak, I understand, for doing it, but he is the father of two girls, and he understands how important it is for us to lift up our young women and make sure that they know they can do the same stuff that any boy can. So as somebody who is accustomed to being criticized once in a while, I just want to give you some advice: Keep at it. [*Laughter*]

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion Jimmie Johnson. Thank you.

The President. Do what you think is right, and you're right on this one.

For Jimmie, it also means giving back to his community, being a good husband to his gorgeous wife Chani, and his daughters, Evie and Lydia, and of course, dominating the track. And this year he is back at it. He has already got more wins than any other driver, so maybe we should just make it easier on everybody, give the number-48 car a permanent White House pass. [*Laughter*] Don't take my parking spot. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Johnson. Yes, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. And no burnouts in the Portico. [*Laughter*] So I just want to say to the entire team, to Hendrick Motorsports, to Chad, to the pit crew, most of all, to Jimmie Johnson: Congratulations. Keep up the great work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brian Z. France, chief executive officer and chairman, National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR); and Michael Jordan, former guard, National Basketball Association's Chicago Bulls.

Remarks at the League of Conservation Voters Capital Dinner
June 25, 2014

The President. Hello, hello, hello! Hello! Well, it's good to be back. First of all, I just want to thank Carol Browner, one of my favorite people. We miss her in the White House, but it looks like she has occupied herself. [*Laughter*] We appreciate all the work that you do helping to protect our planet and to give our children a brighter future, so give Carol a big round of applause. I want to thank Gene Karpinski and everybody at LCV for having me here tonight.

I was telling the story—many people know this—I know you think I'm here just because, like, I care about the environment—[*laughter*]. No, it's deeper than that. I guess Gene told this story: When I ran for the U.S. Senate, I was decidedly the underdog; really, nobody knew me. And LCV, because it's a good-government type, goes through process, and they had the board interview all the candidates. [*Laughter*] And I went in, and I did my shtick—[*laughter*]—and they endorsed me. And I was not at all favored to win, and it was the first and probably only prominent national organization to endorse me in the primary; everybody endorsed me in the general. [*Laughter*] But it

was—for me, at least, it was a testament that this was an organization that cared about ideas and obviously had a really good eye for talent. [*Laughter*] So I am here primarily out of loyalty. There's a little payback going on here. [*Laughter*] But then, there is also the whole protecting the planet thing. [*Laughter*]

The work you do to protect our planet and our country and dealing with the rapidly growing threat of climate change is even more urgent and more important than the last time I spoke to you back in 2006 when I was still a Senator. Because we know two big things: We know more about the threat than we did back then, and we know through experience that we can act; that we don't have to be passive, that we can act in ways that protect our environment and promote economic growth at the same time. We know we can do it. We've shown we can do it.

So exactly 1 year ago today, I was at Georgetown University to announce my Climate Action Plan. And I remember this because it was 95 degrees. [*Laughter*] The staff purposely put the speech outside, and so there are a number of photographs of me wiping my brow, and I don't sweat usually. I was hot. [*Laughter*] But I started my speech the same way I start all my speeches on climate change, with the facts. Not a lot of spin, just the facts.

We know that burning fossil fuels release carbon dioxide. We know that carbon dioxide traps heat. We know that the levels of carbon dioxide are higher than they've been in 800,000 years. We know that the 20 warmest years on record for our planet all happened since 1990 and last month was the warmest May ever recorded. We know that communities across the country are struggling with longer wildfire seasons, more severe droughts, heavier rainfall, more frequent flooding. That's why, last month, hundreds of experts declared that climate change is no longer a distant threat, it's "moved firmly into the present." Those are the facts. You can ignore the facts; you can't deny the facts.

So the question is not whether we need to act. The overwhelming judgment of science, accumulated and measured and reviewed and sliced and diced over decades, has put that to rest. The question is whether we have the will to act before it's too late. Because if we fail to protect the world we leave our children, then we fail in the most fundamental purpose of us being here in the first place.

For more than 40 years, that has been your mission: preserve and protect this planet we call home. And by the way, it's been the mission of a lot of Members of Congress who are here today. It's been a priority of mine for as long as I've been in office. And part of it, maybe, is growing up in Hawaii, where every day you appreciate the wonder of your planet, but you also understand how fragile it is. So we're working in a few ways to do our part: by using more clean energy, less dirty energy, and wasting less energy throughout our economy.

Right now America generates more clean energy than ever before. Thanks in part to the investments we made in the Recovery Act. You remember that old Recovery Act? [*Laughter*] It was the largest investment in green energy and technology in U.S. history. That was just one of its attributes.

As a consequence of those investments, the electricity we generate from wind has tripled since 2008. The energy we generate from the sun has increased more than tenfold. Every 4 minutes, another American home or business goes solar. And last year alone, solar jobs jumped 20 percent.

And the good news is, we can do even better. So my Climate Action Plan will help us double our electricity from renewable energy again by 2020. And I've—I directed the Interior Department to green-light enough private renewable energy capacity on public lands to power more than 6 million homes. The Department of Defense, the biggest energy consumer in America, is installing 3 gigawatts of renewable power on its bases. So we are going to continue to incentivize the adaptation of technologies that are not going to solve our entire problem—there's no silver bullet—but what we're seeing is unit costs go down, efficiency and power generation going up. We're moving, and it's making a difference.

So that's the first part of our plan: generating and using more clean energy. Then we've got to use less dirty energy. Since I took office, we've doubled how far our cars and trucks will go on a gallon of gas by the middle of the next decade. We're helping families and businesses save billions of dollars with more efficient homes and buildings and appliances. By the end of the next decade, these combined efficiency standards for appliances and Federal buildings will reduce carbon pollution by at least 3 billion tons compared to when I took office, and that's an amount equal to what our entire energy sector emits in nearly half a year.

So together, we've held our carbon emissions to levels not seen in about 20 years. And since 2006, no country on Earth has reduced its total carbon pollution by as much as the United States of America.

And by the way, the private sector knows how important this is. Today, at the White House, some of America's leading foundations and impact investors committed more than $300 million to accelerate clean energy technology and energy-efficient buildings. So we're making progress on that front.

But everybody here knows, for the sake of our kids, we've got to do more. Today, about 40 percent of America's carbon pollution comes from our power plants. There are no Federal limits to the amount those plants can pump into the air. None. We limit the amount of toxic chemicals like mercury and sulfur and arsenic in our air and water, but power plants can dump as much carbon pollution into our atmosphere as they want. It's not smart, it's not right, it's not safe, and I determined it needs to stop.

And so that's why, in my speech a year ago, I directed the EPA to build on the efforts of a lot of States and cities and companies, and I told them, come up with commonsense standards for reducing dangerous carbon pollution from our power plants. Last month, I unveiled those proposed standards, which will cut down our carbon pollution and our smog and our soot that threaten the health of our most vulnerable Americans, including children and the elderly. We've constructed it so that States have the flexibility to meet these standards with whatever clean energy sources make sense for them, including renewables and taking advantage of natural glass—natural gas, replacing even dirtier energy sources. And in just the first year that these standards go into effect, they'll help avoid up to 100,000 asthma attacks, about 2,100 heart attacks. Those numbers keep on going up after the first year. And we're taking a whole bunch of carbon out of the atmosphere.

So I say all this to say that, no matter how big a problem, progress is possible. It's not instantaneous; we've got to sometimes cut these things into pieces. But as I told graduates at UC Irvine a couple weeks ago at—[*applause*]—there you go, UC Irvine. [*Laughter*] You got the little anteater. [*Laughter*] It's a—I've got to say, it's a pretty cute mascot. [*Laughter*] An anteater, it's nice, I like it. [*Laughter*]

It's pretty rare that you encounter people who say that the problem of carbon pollution is not a problem. You've all—in most communities and workplaces, et cetera, when you talk to folks, they may not know how big a problem, they may not know exactly how it works, they may doubt that we can do something about it, but generally, they don't just say, no, I don't believe anything scientists say. [*Laughter*] Except where?

Audience members. Congress!

The President. In Congress. [*Laughter*] In Congress. Folks will tell you climate change is a hoax or a fad or a plot. [*Laughter*] It's a liberal plot. [*Laughter*] And then most recently, because many who say that actually know better and they're just embarrassed, they duck the question. They say, hey, I'm not a scientist, which really translates into, I accept that man-made climate change is real, but if I say so out loud, I will be run out of town by a bunch of fringe elements that think science—climate science is a liberal plot, so I'm going to just pretend like, I don't know, I can't read.

I mean, I'm not a scientist either, but I've got this guy, John Holdren; he's a scientist. [*Laughter*] I've got a bunch of scientists at NASA, and I've got a bunch of scientists at EPA. I'm not a doctor either—[*laughter*]—but if a bunch of doctors tell me that tobacco can

cause lung cancer, then I'll say, okay. [*Laughter*] Right? [*Laughter*] I mean, it's not that hard.

Now, the good news is, the American people are wiser than this. Seven in 10 Americans say global warming is a serious problem. Seven in 10 say the Federal Government should limit pollution from our power plants. And of all the issues in the—a recent poll asking Americans where we—where they think we can make a difference, protecting the environment came out on top. We actually believe we can do this. We can make a difference.

And that's in large part thanks to you. Many of you have done just terrific work at the grassroots level: educating, mobilizing. That isn't to say, by the way, and I say this sometimes to environmental groups, it's not to say that it's not easy and that we should not take seriously the very real concerns people have about their current economic state. People don't like gas prices going up. They don't like electricity prices going up. And we ignore those very real and legitimate concerns at our peril, so if we're blithe about saying this is the defining issue of our time, but we don't address people's legitimate economic concerns, then even if they are concerned about climate change, they may not support efforts to do something about it. So we've got to shape our strategies to speak to the very real and legitimate concerns of working families all across America. But we can do that. That's the good news. We can do it.

And the sooner we do it, the better. Right now developing countries have some of the fastest rising levels of carbon pollution. They are less equipped to cope with the effects of climate change than we are. But they're also trying to deal with hundreds of millions of people in poverty. And so the tradeoffs for them are even tougher than for us sometimes, unless we describe how development should leapfrog some of the old technologies, learn lessons from us, and go right to a clean energy future. And we should be part of that conversation, but we've got to lead by example. They're waiting to see what America does. And I'm convinced, when America proves what's possible, other countries are going to come along.

I should point out, by the way, that we're not just acting on climate change; we're also doing more for conservation. Since I took office, we've established 10 new national parks, 10 new national wildlife refuges, 11 new national monuments. I just announced plans to further protect our oceans. And I'm not just going to stand with environmentalists, I'm going to stand with sportsmen and conservationists against Members of Congress who want to dismantle the Clean Water Act. We've got to dredge up that old tape of the Cuyahoga River on fire and the Chicago River and just remind people that this thing worked. It was—one of the great achievements of modern American politics was realizing that we didn't have to trade off a healthy environment for our kids and economic growth. Because, as Americans, we have an obligation to be good stewards of the gifts that have been given and make sure that they're around for our kids and our grandkids.

I don't have to tell you all this. Whether it's shifting to clean energy, preserving our landscapes and natural resources, you understand our mission. You've helped define it. And it's not going to happen overnight. This is a generational project. And sometimes, it can be easy to get discouraged, and to feel like, oh, we're not setting high enough goals, we're not reaching them quickly enough. I know. I read the science. I'm not a scientist, but I read it. [*Laughter*]

But what I also know is, is that when you take those first steps, even if they're hard and even if they're halting sometimes, that you start building momentum and you start mobilizing larger and larger communities. And when it comes to a challenge as far reaching and important as protecting our planet, every step makes a difference.

And one of the great things about it is, is that this is a generational fight, but the younger generation is more attuned to this than just about anybody. You talk to Malia, you talk to Sasha, you talk to your kids or your grandkids, and this is something they get. It's—they don't need a lot of persuading. They understand how

important this is. And that should make us hopeful and optimistic.

And I'll close with a story I heard recently that illustrates the point. I called Gregg Popovich, coach of the San Antonio Spurs, to congratulate him on winning the NBA Championship. And by—and I love Pop. He is not just a great coach, he is a great guy. And I've gotten to know him and really love the guy. And for more than a decade, Coach Pop has hung a sign in the Spurs locker room for all his players to see. And on that sign is a quote from a 19th-century reformer, which is not what you'd expect to see in an NBA locker room, but that's the kind of guy Coach Popovich is, and the quote goes something like this: "When nothing seems to help, I go look at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at that—at the hundred and first blow, it will split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it, but all that had gone before."

So that's what we're doing. Together, we are pounding the rock. And together, we are making progress. And sometimes, it feels like, man, I'm getting tired. [*Laughter*] And we're not moving fast enough. But then one day, the rock splits open, not because one person comes up or one President comes up and strikes a mighty blow, but because of all the work that has gone on before. Our work. So until the day comes that the rock is split, we've all got to take turns pounding. We've got to keep fighting. We've got to keep mobilizing. We've got to keep making sure that your voices are heard in Congress, in State capitals, in city halls. Because that's the only way we're going to build the kind of future that we want: cleaner, more prosperous, more good jobs; a future where we can look our kids in the eye and tell them we did our part, we served you well, we were good stewards, we're passing this on.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:23 p.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Carol M. Browner, in her capacity as member of the board of directors, and Gene Karpinski, president, League of Conservation Voters.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Town Hall Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota
June 26, 2014

The President. Hey! Hello, Minneapolis! Good to see you. Good to see you. Well, everybody have a seat. It is good to be back in Minnesota. Last time I was here, it was colder. [*Laughter*] Yes, here's just a tip for folks who are not from Minnesota: If you come here and the Minnesotans are complaining about how cold it is, it's really cold. [*Laughter*] Because these are some pretty tough folks. They don't get phased with cold. But it was cold. So it's nice to be back when it's a little warmer.

And I have to begin by congratulating our U.S. soccer team, Team U.S.A., for advancing to the next round of the World Cup.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. U.S.A.!

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Absolutely. We were in what's called the "Group of Death." [*Laughter*] And even though we didn't win today, we were in the toughest grouping, and we got through. And so we've still got a chance to win the World Cup. And we could not be prouder of them. They are defying the odds and earned a lot of believers in the process. And I want everybody on the team to know that all of us back home are really proud of them.

So I—let me tell you something. I've been really looking forward to getting out of DC. [*Laughter*] But I've also been looking forward to spending a couple days here in the Twin Cities. Our agenda is still a little loose. I might

pop in for some ice cream or visit a small business. I don't know. I'm just going to make it up as I go along. With Secret Service—I always tease them—I'm like a caged bear, and every once in a while, I break loose. And I'm feeling super loose today. So you don't know what I might do. You don't know what I might do. Who knows?

But the main reason I'm glad to be here is I just wanted to have a chance to talk to folks about their lives and their hopes and their dreams and what they're going through. And I want to spend some time listening and answering your questions and just having a conversation about what's going well in your lives and in your neighborhoods and communities right now, but also what kinds of struggles folks are going through, and what things are helping and what things aren't.

Now, before I do I just want to mention our Governor, Mark Dayton, is here. And Mark gave me an update on the flooding that's been going on all across the State, and I know some folks here are probably affected by it as well. We made sure that FEMA is already on the ground here. The Army Corps of Engineers is helping to build up a levee in Warroad. I told the Governor that we will be there as we get some clarity about the damage and what needs to be done, and you are going to—you should feel confident that you're going to have a strong partner in FEMA and the Federal Government in the process of cleaning up.

And you can also feel confident because if we didn't help out, then I'd have Mayor Coleman and Mayor Hodges and Congressman Keith Ellison giving me a hard time. So they're going to hold me to it. They do a great job on behalf of their constituents every day.

I also wanted to mention that up the road, there's a memorial service for a person that many of you knew and loved, and that's Jim Oberstar, who served so long in Congress. I had a chance to know Jim; we overlapped before he came back home. He was a good man. He was a good public servant. He was somebody who never forgot the folks in the Iron Range that he was fighting for. And in a lot of ways, what he represented was a time when folks went to Washington, but they understood that they were working on behalf of hard-working middle class families and people who were trying to get into the middle class.

And that fight continues. We've made progress. And the one thing that I always remind people of is, on just about every economic measure, we are significantly better off than we were when I came into office. Unemployment is down, the deficits have been cut in half, housing market has improved, 401(k)s have gotten more solid. The number of people who are uninsured are down. Our exports are up, our energy production is up. So in the aggregate, when you look at the country as a whole, by pretty much every measure, the economy is doing better than it was when I came into office and in most cases significantly better.

We've created now 9.4 million new jobs over the last 51 months. The unemployment rate here in Minnesota is the lowest it's been since 2007. But here's the thing, and I'm not telling you anything that you don't know: There are still a lot of folks struggling out there.

We've got an economy that, even when it grows and corporate profits are high and the stock market is doing well, is still having trouble producing increases in salary and increases in wages for ordinary folks. So we've seen wages and incomes sort of flatline, even though the costs of food and housing and other things have gone up. And so there are a lot of people who work really hard, do the right thing, are responsible, but still find at the end of the month that they're not getting ahead. And that is the central challenge that drives me every single day when I think about what kinds of policies would help.

So I've put forward an opportunity agenda that is a continuation of things I've been talking about since I came into the United States Senate and served with Mark and things that I've been working on since I became President: making sure that hard work pays off; making sure that if you work hard, your kid can go to a good school and end up going to college without a huge amount of debt, that you're not going to go broke if you get sick, that you're

able to have a home of your own, that you're able to retire with some dignity and some respect, maybe a vacation once in a while. That's what people are looking for. And that means that we've got to reverse this mindset that somehow if everybody at the top does really well, then somehow, benefits all automatically trickle down. Because that's not what's been happening for the last 20, 30 years.

We had—on Monday, we had what we called a White House Working Families Summit. And we just talked about bread-and-butter issues that everybody talks about around the kitchen table, but unfortunately, don't make it on the nightly news a lot. So we talked about childcare and the fact that it's prohibitive for too many young families. We talked about paid family leave, so that if a child was sick or a parent was sick, that you could actually go help and take care of them, which is, by the way, what every other developed country does. We're the only one that doesn't have it.

We talked about workplace flexibility, so that if you wanted to go to a parent-teacher conference with your family—or for your kid, or a school play, that you could balance that. And in fact, those companies, we discovered at the summit, who provide that kind of flexibility usually have more productive workers, harder working workers, more loyal workers, lower turnover, and the companies end up being more profitable.

We talked about increasing the minimum wage, which would benefit millions of people all across the country. We talked about equal pay for equal work, because I want my daughters getting paid the same as men do.

All of these things are achievable, but we've got to make Washington work for you, not for special interests, not for lobbyists. We don't need a politics that's playing to some—the most fringe elements of politics. We just need folks who are having a commonsense conversation about what's happening in your lives and how can we help and then trying to take some concrete actions that makes a difference.

So that's what I want to talk about. And I'm hoping that some people in Washington are going to be listening. Some of them will be, and they'll probably be saying I'm crazy or a Socialist or something—[*laughter*]—but, hopefully, they're—hearing from you, some of this stuff will sink in. All right?

So with that, I'm just going to take some questions. I've got my little hot tea here to make sure I don't lose my voice. And I think we've got microphones in the audience, and I'm just going to call on folks. The only rule I've got is when I call on you, you've got to wait for the microphone, introduce yourself. If you keep your question relatively short, I'll try to keep my answers relatively short. And I'm going to go boy, girl, boy, girl to make sure it's fair, all right? [*Laughter*]

All right. Let's start it off. All right, who wants to go first? This young lady right here. Tell me your name.

Study Abroad Programs

Q. Hello, I'm Sheryl Hill.

The President. Hey, Sheryl.

Q. And I admire you so much and your office for the support we've received. I'm the founder of ClearCause. I work to protect our students abroad. I support hundreds of students who worked their way up through college—our best and our brightest—are not well protected by any surveillance or laws. They are robbed, raped, starved, abandoned, and killed. I'm here because of my son Tyler Hill.

The President. Well, the—so this is like an exchange programs?

Q. Study abroad.

The President. Study abroad program. Generally, study abroad programs are coordinated by the universities and colleges that sponsor them. There should be interaction between those educational institutions and the State Department. There are obviously some countries that are particularly dangerous, and in those cases, I think making sure that everybody has good information going in is important.

Tragedies happen when folks travel overseas. Unfortunately, tragedies happen here as well. But what I'd like to do is—let me find out more about the nature of the coordination that happens between the State Department and study abroad programs and see if there are

some things that we can do to tighten them up. And it sounds like you've been thinking about it, so you may have some ideas. Excellent.

Gentleman in the cool sunglasses there.

Gun Control

Q. Good morning, Mr. President—or afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Dan Morette. And my question is—you spoke about tragedies at home—and how we can reduce gun violence in this Nation and what we can do to team up together and really make a difference.

The President. Well, on my way over here I was talking to a mom that I had lunch with, who's wonderful, by the way, and she's here, but I'm not going to embarrass her. And she's got a couple of young sons. And we talked about a whole bunch of issues: the cost of childcare, the fact that wages don't go up to meet the cost of living. But one thing she talked about was Newtown. And I described how the day that Sandy Hook happened was probably the worst day of my Presidency, and meeting those families just a couple days after they lost these beautiful 6-year-olds—20 of them—and then some of the parents—or some of the teachers and administrators who had been affected as well.

I was sure after that happened, there's no way that Congress isn't going to do some commonsense stuff. I mean, I thought that the issue of gun safety and commonsense legislation has been controversial for some time, but I thought that was going to be a breakthrough moment. The fact that it wasn't was probably the most disappointing moment that I've had with Congress.

What we've done is, we've developed 24 executive actions, things that were in our power, to really try to tighten tracking where guns go, making sure that we're sifting through and separating out responsible gun owners from folks who really shouldn't be having a weapon.

So we've probably made some progress. We've probably saved a few lives. But I will tell you, this is the only advanced country that tolerates something like this. We have what's basically a mass shooting, it seems like, happening once every couple weeks: kids on college campuses, kids at home. And we're not going to be able to eliminate all of that violence, and there's a strong tradition of gun ownership, and there are wonderful folks who are sportsman and hunters, and I respect all that. But we should be able to take some basic, commonsense steps that are, by the way, supported by most responsible gun owners, like having background checks so you can't just walk into a store and buy a semiautomatic.

So this is something I'm going to keep on talking about, but I was asked about this a few weeks ago, and I said, honestly, this is not going to change unless the people who want to prevent these kinds of mass shootings from taking place feel at least as passionate and are at least as mobilized and well funded and organized as the NRA and the gun manufacturers are. Because the politics in Congress are such where even Members of Congress who know better are fearful that if they vote their conscience and support commonsense back—gun legislation like background checks, they're worried that they're going to lose their seat. And frankly, there's a number who have, because the other side is very well organized.

So I will keep on talking about it. We're going to continue to work with law enforcement and community groups and others to try to take steps locally and at the State level. But if we're going to do something nationally, then we're going to have to mobilize ordinary folks—moms, dads, families, responsible gun owners, law enforcement—and they're going to have to get organized and be able to counter the pressure that's coming from the other side in a sustained way. Not in a 1-week or 2-week or 1-month situation right after a tragedy occurs, it's going to have to just keep on going for several years before we are able to make progress. Okay? Good.

All right. Young lady right there. The one in the orange right—got a mike right next to you.

College Affordability/Federal Student Loan Programs

Q. I'm an educator in a public school, and I have a son in college who's struggling through

college with student loans. I've been an educator for 27-plus years. And I know you're into sports, and I hear they generate a lot of money. We generate a lot of minds. And it really bothers me that I can't pay for his education.

The President. What's—I'm just curious what your son's circumstances are. Is he going to a State school? Is he going to a private school?

Q. He's going to a community college.

The President. He's going to a community college.

Q. And wants to go to college in New York, in fashion design.

The President. Okay. But he's in community college here in Minnesota right now?

Q. Correct.

The President. And is he eligible for the Federal student loans programs? Or is he finding that because of your income or your family's income that it's hard to get some of the lower interest loans?

Q. Both. He's kind of both.

The President. Okay. Well, look, this is something we've been spending a lot of time on. There are a couple components to the problem. And by the way, this is something near and dear to my heart because I was not born into a wealthy family. I'm only here because of my education, but the reason I was able to get that education was because grants, loans, work during the summer—all those things allowed me to pay the bills.

But college costs were lower then, when I was going to school. I know you can't tell from my gray hair, but I'm getting a little older now. [*Laughter*] And I—so I started college in 1979, and when I graduated—I was able to get a 4-year college education—I had some debt, but I could pay it off after 1 year. Now the average student that does have debt is seeing $30,000 worth of debt. And even if they're able to take out loans, that's a burden that they're carrying with them in their first job. It may prevent them from buying their first home. If they've got a business idea, that's money that is going to take them a while before they're able to start a business, and as a consequence, it affects the whole economy.

Now, it is really important just to remind everybody, a college education is still a great investment as long as you graduate. As long as you graduate. So when you go into college, you've got to be determined, "I'm going to graduate." It's a great investment, but it's not a great investment if you take out $20,0000 worth of debt and you don't graduate, and you don't get the degree, which is why we're spending a lot of time talking to colleges about what are you doing to retain students.

But the things that we need to do are, number one, try to keep costs of student loans down. We've been working with colleges and universities, telling them, if the Federal Government is going to help subsidize your universities essentially with the student loan program, you need to show us that you are informing students ahead of time how much they're going to owe, that you are describing for them what their repayment plans would be, that you are keeping tuition low, and that you're graduating folks at a high rate.

So we've got to work with the colleges and universities to lower costs. We've got to keep the interest rates on student loans low. Right now there's legislation that was presented in the Senate—Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren sponsored it—and what it does is, it just allows student loans that you already have to be consolidated, and you can refinance them at a lower rate just like you could your mortgage if the rates go down. Republicans all voted against it. I don't know why. You will have to ask them. But that's an example of a tool we can use.

We've also put in place—this is something that I passed a while back and now I've expanded—a program whereby you never have to pay more than 10 percent of your current income to pay back your student loans, so that if you decide you want to go into teaching or you want to go into social work—something that is—may not be a high-paying profession, but a satisfying profession—that the fact that you've had some student debt is not going to preclude you from taking that position.

So there are a number of different steps that we're taking. I will tell you, though, in addition

to what we do at the Federal level, you're going to need to talk to your State legislators. Part of the reason that tuition has gone up is because State legislatures across the country have consistently lowered the support that they provide public universities and community colleges, and then the community colleges and the public universities feel obliged to increase tuition rates. And that obviously adds the burden to students.

The bottom line is, your son is doing the right thing. The fact that he's starting at a community college will save him money. Even if he wants to graduate from a 4-year institution eventually, costs—it will still be a good investment. So he should shop around, get the right information. We're going to do everything we can to make sure that we keep it as affordable as possible. And I'm sure he's going to do wonderfully, and then he's going to look after his mom.

All right. Okay, it's a guy's turn. This gentleman right here.

Federal Funding for Research and Development/Advanced Manufacturing Hubs/Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education

Q. Mr. President, like you, I'm the father of two beautiful, intelligent girls.

The President. Can't beat daughters. No offense, sons, but—[*laughter*].

Q. And they're both in STEM careers. I'm wondering what we can do to promote and encourage more girls to go into STEM careers.

The President. Oh, this is a great question. [*Applause*] This is a great question. First of all, STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and math.

America became an economic superpower in large part because we were the most innovative economy. We are a nation of inventors and tinkerers, and we expand the boundaries of what's possible through science. And that continues to be the case. We still have the most cutting-edge technology, the most patents. But if we're not careful, we'll lose our lead. And if things aren't being invented here, then they're not being produced here. And if they're not being produced here, that means the jobs aren't being created here. And over time, other countries catch up.

So what do we have to do? Number one, we've got to make sure that we're investing in basic science. Sometimes, people say, I don't know what the Federal Government spends the money on; they're all just wasting it. You know, one of the things that the Federal Government does is, it invests in basic research that companies won't invest in. And if it wasn't for the investment in basic research, then things like the Internet, things like GPS that everybody uses every day, things that result in cures for diseases that have touched probably every family that's represented here in some fashion—that stuff never happens.

You do the basic research, and then you move on to commercialize it, and that's oftentimes when the private sector gets involved. But they're not willing or able a lot of times to finance basic research. So that's number one.

Number two, we've got to make sure that we're investing in working with companies who are doing, let's say, advanced manufacturing, the next phases of manufacturing, linking them up with universities so that once we have a good idea, a good invention—whether it's clean energy or a new way to build a car—that the next phase of production and innovation is done here in the United States. And we've opened up four what we call advanced manufacturing hubs around the country—I actually want 15—where we link private sector and universities so that they become centers of innovation and jobs get created here in the United States.

But the third thing we need is we need more folks in engineering, math, science, technology, computer science. And that means we've got to have a school system, generally that encourages those subjects. And by the way, I was a political science and English major, and you need to know how to communicate, and I loved the liberal arts, so this is no offense, but we've got enough lawyers like me. We need more engineers. We need more scientists.

Generally speaking, we're not doing a good enough educating kids and encouraging them into these kinds of careers. We're particularly

bad when it comes to girls. And my whole thing is—somebody said I was a sports fan. I am. And one rule of sports is, you don't play as well if you've only got half the team. We don't have everybody on the field right now if our young women are not being encouraged the same way to get into these fields. So this starts at an early age.

What we've done is, I've used my Office of Science and Technology to partner with elementary schools to, first of all, train teachers better in STEM, then to really focus on populations that are underrepresented in STEM—not only young women, but also African Americans, Latinos, others—getting them interested early. In some cases, for example, we know that young girls—I know as a father—they oftentimes do better if they're in a team and social environments, so making sure that the structure of science classes, for example, have collaboration involved and there's actual experience doing stuff, as opposed to just it being a classroom exercise. There are certain things that can end up making it a better experience for them, boosting their confidence, and encouraging them to get into the fields.

So we're going to continue to really spend a lot of time on this. I'll just close by saying every year now, I have a science fair at the White House, because my attitude is, if I'm bringing the top football and basketball teams to the White House, I should also bring the top scientists. I want them to feel that they get the spotlight just like athletes do. And these kids are amazing, except they make you feel really stupid. [*Laughter*]

The first young—the first student who I met—she's now—she just graduated. When she was 12, she was diagnosed with a rare liver cancer. Fortunately, she had health insurance. They caught it early enough, she responded to treatment. Lovely young lady—it didn't come back. But by the time she got into high school, she—and she was taking biology and chemistry, she became interested in, why was it that I got this thing at 12 years old?

So she talks to her teachers, and she designs a study where she goes to the surgeon who took out the cancer from her liver, takes samples, identifies the genetic profile and the chromosomes that might have led to this particular kind of cancer, writes up the research in Science magazine, and now has a scholarship to Harvard to pursue her interest in biomedicine. And as you might imagine, her parents are pretty proud of her. [*Laughter*] I was really proud of her.

But it gives you a sense of the possibilities for young people and young women if somebody is sparking that interest in them and telling them this is something that they can do and they should pursue their interests.

All right. Okay. Young lady right here in the yellow.

Q. Hi, my name is Joelle Stangler. I'm the University of Minnesota student body president. And so I have a question about higher education. And I also have a softball question after this hardball question.

The President. Okay, I'd love the softball question.

Presidential Commencement Addresses/Federal Student Loan Programs/College Affordability

Q. My first question is, the House Republicans recently released their recommendations for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and so I want to know where you think that Republicans and Democrats can work together and what the top priorities should be for reauthorization. And my softball question is, how do you get a President to be your commencement speaker? Kids want to know. [*Laughter*]

The President. Oh! Well, first of all, you have to invite me. [*Laughter*] So that's always a good start. I just did my last commencement at UC Irvine. I have to say, they had a campus-wide letter-writing campaign; I think we ended up getting, like, 10,000 letters, was it, from them, something like that. They also have a very cute mascot. It's an anteater. I guess that's their sign; that's supposed to be the anteater.

Audience member. We've got a gopher.

The President. Gophers are cool. [*Laughter*] Gophers are cool.

So—but the invitation is a good place to start, and then we'll work from there.

In terms of the higher education reauthorization act, that's a big bill, there's a lot of complexities to it. I will just focus on an area that I think should be the focus—and we've already talked about—and that is student loan costs and how we can hold schools more accountable for informing young people, as they're starting their education, what exactly it's going to mean for them.

Now, we've already started this. I mentioned a few things. One thing I didn't mention is the Consumer Finance Protection Board that we set up that, in response to what had happened during the great recession, when people were taking out mortgages they couldn't afford and predatory lenders were getting folks in a whole lot of trouble. And we said, the same way that you should be protected from a faulty appliance or a faulty car, you should be protected from a faulty financial instrument, make sure it doesn't explode in your face.

And one of the goals of CFPB, is what it's called, was to tackle the student loan issue. And what we've done is created what we call a Know What You Owe program, which pushes colleges and universities not to do the financial counseling on the exit interview where suddenly they hand you a packet and says, here, this is what you're going to owe—hand it to folks at the beginning, break it down for them. And that will allow young people, I think, to make better decisions and their parents to work with them to make better decisions about what college expenses are going to be.

But as I said before—this is true for education generally—the Federal Government can help, but States and local governments have to do their part as well. In public education, the Federal Government accounts for about 7 percent of total costs. The rest of it comes from State and local taxes. And what we've tried to do is leverage the little bit of money that the Federal Government gives to this to modify how—to incentivize reform and to get folks to experiment with new ways of learning.

For example, can we use online classes more effectively to help keep college costs down? Can we get more high school students to get transferable college credits while they're in high school so that they can maybe graduate in 3 years instead of 2? We're trying to encourage folks to experiment in those ways.

All of that, we hope, can get embodied in the Higher Education Act. I will tell you, sometimes if I'm for it, then the other side is against it, even if originally it was their idea. So I can't guarantee you that we'll get bipartisan support for these ideas, but it—there's nothing that should prevent us from doing it because this is just about making a college education a better value for families. And that's something that should transcend party; it shouldn't be a Democrat or a Republican issue. Okay?

All right. Gentleman right here in the uniform.

Q. All right, my name is—well, good afternoon, Mr. President.

The President. Good afternoon.

Job Training Programs/Vocational and Technical Education

Q. My name is John Martinez. I'm a recent EMT graduate from the Freedom House EMS Academy in Saint Paul.

The President. Okay, there you go.

Q. Currently, I'm teaching at the Academy, and I just got hired at Allina; I applied for Saint Paul Fire. My question is, have you considered starting any other organizations such as the Freedom House for law enforcement or fire or other establishments that could get programs like that going for low-income or minorities?

The President. You know, I'll confess to you I don't know enough about Freedom House, so I'm considering it right now. [*Laughter*] But you've got to tell me more about it. The—since you're an instructor there and a graduate from there, why don't you tell me how it works?

Q. All right. You go through an interviewing process, and the leaders—there's fire chiefs that interview the candidates. You get paid, but it is an interviewing process. You wear a uniform; it's a strict program. And it's a 14-week or a 10-week program, depending on what time of the year. It's intensive. Everything is compacted, all the information that we learn. And you learn skills, all the skills that you need

to be an EMT. You meet, you network, you meet fire chiefs, police. I know people that are going into med school. It started in 1967 in Philadelphia. And it's been——

The President. Well, it sounds like a great program.

Q. Yes.

The President. And who's eligible for it? Is it young people who have already graduated from high school, but haven't yet gone to college? If I'm 30 years old and I'm thinking, let me try a new career—who is it that can participate?

Q. Anyone from the ages of 17 to 30 is eligible. You have to meet the income requirements. And it's open to anyone who wants to get into EMS or fire.

The President. Well, that's a great idea. Well, see, you just gave me a good idea. [*Laughter*] All right. So now I'm considering expanding it.

I—it's a good example, though, of a broader issues, which is not everybody is going to go to a 4-year university, but everybody is going to need some advanced training. And so the question is, how do we set up systems—whether it's apprenticeships, whether it's programs like Freedom House that you just described, whether it's through the community colleges—where whatever stage in your life, if you feel as if you're stuck in your existing occupation, you want to do better, or you lose your job and you've got to transition to a new industry, that you are able to get training that fits you. Understanding that for a lot of folks, they may be working at the same time as they are looking after their kids, and so there's got to be some flexibility. The programs have to be more compact. Most importantly, they have to be job training programs that—or technical programs that actually produce the skills you need to get jobs that are there.

And so what we've been trying to do is to—which seems like common sense, but unfortunately, for a long time wasn't done—going to the businesses first that are hiring and ask them, well, what exactly are you looking for, and why don't you work with the community college, or why don't you work with the nonprofit to help design the actual training program so that you'll have the benefit of knowing if somebody has gone through the program, they're prepared for the job? Conversely, the person who's going through the training program, they know, if they complete it, that there's a job at the other end. And that's how we're actually trying to redesign a lot of the job training programs that are out there.

But as I said before, you've also got to make sure that you structure it so that a working mom who can't afford to just quit her job and go to school, she's—maybe she's a waitress right now—she's interested in being a nurse's assistant that has slightly better pay and benefits and then wants to become a nurse, that she has the opportunity to work around her schedule, make sure that we've got the ability to take classes at night or on weekends or online.

That's how, in the future, we're going to have to redesign a lot of this stuff, getting away from thinking that all the training that's going to take place is just for 18- and 19-year-olds who are—who've got all day and are supported by their parents, because that's not the model that our economy is going to be in for the foreseeable future. Okay?

Young lady. Yes, in the stripes.

Wage Equality/Workplace Flexibility Policies

Q. Hi, my name is Erin. I just left a corporation in Minnesota, a Fortune 500 corporation, where I had my 4-year degree, my male counterpart did not, and he was making $3 more an hour than I was. My question for you is, what are we going to do about it so as I grow up and other women grow up, we are not experiencing the wage gap anymore?

The President. Well, I've got all kinds of opinions on this. [*Laughter*]

First of all—I told this story at the Working Families Summit—my mom was a single mom. She worked, went to school, raised two kids with the help of my grandparents. And I remember what it was like for her. Coming home, she's dead tired, she's trying to fix a healthy meal for me and my sister, which meant there were only really like five things in the rotation because she didn't have time to be

practicing with a whole bunch of stuff. And sometimes, because you're a kid, you're stupid, so you're all like, I don't want to eat that again. [*Laughter*] And she's like, really? [*Laughter*] What did you make? Eat your food. [*Laughter*]

But I remember the struggles that she would go through when she did finally get her advanced degree, got a job, and she'd experience on-the-job discrimination because of her gender.

My grandmother, she was Rosie the Riveter. She—when my grandfather went to fight in World War II, part of Patton's army, she stayed home because my mom was born at—in Kansas, at Fort Leavenworth, and my grandmother worked at a bomber assembly line. And she was whip smart. I mean, she—in another era, she would have ended up running a company. But at the time, she didn't even get her college degree—worked as a secretary. She was smart enough that she worked her way up to be a vice president at the local bank where she—where we lived, which is why sometimes, when I watch "Mad Men," there's Peggy and Joan, the two women there, I'm always rooting for them because that—I imagine them—that's what it was like for my grandmother, kind of working her way up.

But she, as smart as she was, she got to a certain point, and then she stopped advancing. And then she would train guys how to do the job, and they would end up being her boss. And it happened three or four times.

So this is something that I care a lot about not just because of my past, but also because of my future. I've got two daughters. The idea that they would not be paid the same or not have the same opportunities as somebody's sons is infuriating. And even if you're not a dad, those of you who have partners, spouses—men—this is not a women's issue. Because if they're not getting paid, that means they're not bringing home as much money, which means your family budget is tighter. So this is a family issue and not a gender issue.

So what can we do? First bill I signed was something called the Lilly Ledbetter Act, that allowed folks to sue if they found out that they had been discriminated against, like you found out. Back then, Lilly Ledbetter, this wonderful woman, she had been paid less than her male counterparts for the same job for over a decade. When she finally finds out, she sues, and the Supreme Court says, well, the statute of limitations has run out; you can't sue for all of that backpay. She says, well, I just found out—well, that doesn't matter. So we've reversed that law, allowing people to sue based on when you find out.

Most recently, what I did was, we made it against the law, at least for Federal contractors, to retaliate against employees for sharing job—or salary information. Because part of the problem—part of the reason that it's hard to enforce equal pay for equal work is, most employers don't let you talk, or discourage talk, about what everybody else is getting paid. And what we've said is, women have a right to know what the guy sitting next to them who's doing the exact same job is getting paid. So that's something we were able to do.

But ultimately, we're going to need Congress to act. There have been repeated efforts at us—by us to get what we call the Paycheck Fairness Act through Congress, and Republicans have blocked it. Some have denied that it's a problem. What they've said is, you know what, women make different choices. That explains the wage gap. That's the reason that women on average make 77 cents to every dollar that a man earns, is because they're making different choices.

Well, first of all, that's not true in your case, because you were doing the same job. You didn't make a different choice; you just were getting paid less. But let's even unpack this whole idea of making different choices. What they're really saying is, because women have to bear children, so—and a company doesn't give them enough maternity leave or doesn't give them enough flexibility, that they should be punished.

And our whole point is that this is a family issue and that if we structure the workplace to actually be family friendly, which everybody always talks about, but we don't always actually practice, then women won't have to make different choices. Then if they're pregnant and

have a child, it's expected that they're going to have some time off. By the way, the dads should too. They should have some flexibility in the workplace. They should be able to take care of a sick kid without getting docked for pay.

And there are some wonderful companies who are doing this. And as I said before, it turns out that when companies adopt family-friendly policies their productivity goes up, they have lower turnover, which makes sense. You—look, if you have a family emergency and you go to your boss and you say, "Can I have a week off? I've got to take care of a sick child or dad," or, "Can I leave early this afternoon because my kid is in a school play and I really think this is important?," and they say, "Of course, nothing is more important than family," how hard are you going to work for that person when you get back on the job? You're going to feel invested in them. You're going to say to yourself, man, these folks care about me, which means I care about you. And if I have to take some extra time on a weekend, or I've got to do some work late at night when I'm not under an emergency situation, I'm going to do that.

So this makes good business sense. But the problem is, is that we haven't done enough to encourage these new models. And this is part of the reason why we did this family summit—we wanted to lift this stuff up, show companies that are doing the right thing, encourage others to adopt the same practices, and maybe get some legislation that incentivizes better policies.

In the meantime, though, if you're doing the same job, you should make the same pay, period, full stop. That should be a basic rule. That shouldn't be subject to confusion.

Let's see, this young man back here, right there.

Climate Change

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President.

The President. Good afternoon. What's your name?

Q. My name is Quinn Graham. I'm an intern with Right Track. And——

The President. What's Right Track? Tell me about it.

Q. Right Track. It's a youth jobs program through the city of Saint Paul.

The President. That's great. Now, what grade are you going into next year?

Q. I'm going to be a senior next year.

The President. Fantastic. How did junior year go?

Q. What?

The President. How did junior year go?

Q. Yes.

The President. It was okay? What do you mean, yes? No, how did junior year go?

Q. Oh, it went well.

The President. It went well?

Q. Sorry. Yes.

The President. Okay. I just wanted—because Malia is going into her junior year, and I hear it's pretty busy your junior year.

Q. Yes.

The President. Yes? Well, you look like you survived it.

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay. You wanted to get to your question. Please go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Q. Yes. I was wondering how you would propose to address the growing issue of climate change.

The President. Well, as it just so happens—now, this young man was not a plant. [*Laughter*] But as it just so happens, last year yesterday, I announced my Climate Action Plan. And let me just set the stage by saying that the science here is settled: Carbon dioxide is released by a whole bunch of manmade activities.

When you release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere it traps heat. We are seeing the highest levels of carbon dioxide and, as a consequence, some of the warmest temperatures that we've seen in hundreds of thousands of years. They're going up. And this is not just a problem of polar bears—although, I really like polar bears—and the ice caps melting. What happens is, is that when temperatures on average go up, it throws weather patterns into a whole bunch of different directions.

So it may mean that snowcaps on mountains diminish. And out west, entire States get their

water from snowcaps. If you're not getting the same amount of water, you now have the potential for more severe drought. Agriculture is impacted, which means your food bills go up. California is going through the worst drought it's gone through in a very, very long time. That raises the price of all the fruits and vegetables that are grown in California, so it hits you in your pocketbook.

Wildfires may increase. And in fact, we've seen record wildfires. We're having to spend more money fighting fires now than we ever have. It makes hurricanes potentially more frequent and potentially more powerful. So Hurricane Sandy may not be as unusual as it used to be. You see higher incidents of flooding. Coastal States like Florida, there are neighborhoods where now, every time there's a high tide, there's a flood in these neighborhoods.

And the problem is, it's getting worse. Because as folks in China and India and other places decide they want to have cars too, and they want to have electricity and the things that we've got, they start building more power plants, and they start driving more and all of that adds to more carbon dioxide, and it starts compounding.

So this is something we have to deal with. Now, the good news is, there are things we can do. So we doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars. By the middle of the next decade, cars and trucks are going to go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That's going to save you money in your pocketbook, but it's also taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

We've invested in clean energy. Since I came into office, we're producing three times as much energy through wind power, and we're producing about 10 times as much energy through solar power, and we're creating jobs here in the United States: folks installing wind turbines and solar panels. So it's good economics, and it's also good for the environment.

Most recently, what I've done is, I've said—about 40 percent of the carbon that we emit comes from power plants. So what we've said is, we're—through the Environmental Protection Agency—we're going to set standards. We set standards for the amount of mercury and arsenic and sulfur that's pumped out by factories and power plants into our air and our water. Right now we don't have a cap on the amount of carbon pollution. So we said we're going to cap it.

And we're going to let States work with their private sector and local governments to come up with what's going to be best for them. Not every State is going to do the same thing. Nevada might emphasize solar power. South Dakota might emphasize wind power. Whatever it is that you're going to do, you've got to start bringing down your carbon pollution.

Now, this has some controversy. Oil companies, not wild about it; coal companies, not crazy about it. These traditional sources of fuel—fossil fuels—we're going to use for a while, but we can't just keep on using them forever. We've got to develop new ways of producing energy so that your generation isn't seeing a planet that is starting to break down, with all the costs associated with it.

Last point I'll make: One of the benefits of asking power plants to produce energy that's cleaner is, it—when they control their carbon dioxide, they're also putting less soot in the air. They're also putting less particulates in the air. And what that means is your child is less likely to get asthma and those with respiratory diseases are less likely to be impacted. So it has a public health effect that is good as well.

We can have an environment that is cleaner, that is healthy for us, and at the same time, develop entire new industries in clean energy. But we're going to have to get started now. And that's why, despite some of the pushback from some of the special interests out there, we're going to just keep on going at this, and—because we don't have a choice. This is something that we're going to have to tackle during this generation to make sure we're giving a good future for the next generation. All right? Great question.

Last question, last question. This young lady in the pink. Go ahead.

Federal Employees/Federal Government Shutdown/Federal Budget/Deficit and National Debt/Iraq

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President.

The President. Good afternoon.

Q. My name is Katie Peterson. And my coworker here and friend, we've been working for the Federal Government for almost 29 years. And we feel really privileged that we've been able to serve that way.

The President. Where do you work?

Q. For Defense Contract Management Agency.

The President. Excellent.

Q. And—but it's been a great career, and we love it. But lately, as you know, there's been a few rough patches, with 3 years of pay freeze and sequestration and furloughs. And we're just kind of wondering what you foresee for the next, like, fiscal year as—for Government workers.

The President. Well, let me make a couple of points. First of all, folks in the Federal Government, the overwhelming majority, they work really hard doing really important stuff. And I don't know why it is that—[*applause*]—I don't know when it was that somehow working for government—whether at the State or local or Federal level—somehow became not a real job. When you listen to some of the Republican rhetoric sometimes, you think, well, this is really important work that we depend on.

We've got floods right here, right now. The Federal Government is coming in, and it's going to be working with local communities that are overwhelmed to try to make sure that people get help rebuilding. Those are Federal workers. If they weren't around after a tornado or a hurricane, communities would be in a world of hurt.

When you check the weather, even on your smartphone, that information didn't just come from some Silicon Valley office. That came from the National Weather Service. We put out the data developed by the Federal Government through our satellites that are paid for, and then, it's commercialized. And people use it to set up things like the Weather Channel and weather.com and websites.

The folks who help our men and women in uniform make sure that they've got proper equipment, those are Federal workers. Fighting fires, a lot of times those are Federal workers in the Forest Service.

So it frustrates me when I hear people acting as if somebody who's working for the Federal Government somehow is less than somebody working in the private sector. If they're doing a good job and carrying on an important function, we should praise them.

The same is true, by the way, at the local level. [*Applause*] The same is true at the local level. I don't know a job more important than teaching. Those are all government workers. In fact, one of the biggest problems we had in coming out of this recession, in addition to it being the worst recession since the Great Depression, was that States and local governments were cutting back on their hiring at an unprecedented rate. We still haven't seen State and local government hiring get back to where it was back in 2007, 2008. If we had, if we hadn't lost so many teachers and teachers' aides in a lot of communities, the unemployment rate would be much lower, and the economy would be much stronger.

So I say all this just to make a general point, which is, historically, it's been the private sector that drove the economy, but it was also a whole bunch of really great work done by agricultural extension workers and engineers at NASA and researchers at our labs that helped to create the platform and the wealth that we enjoy. And so this whole idea that somehow government is the enemy or the problem is just not true.

Now, are there programs that the Government does that are a waste of money or aren't working as well as they should be? Of course. But I tell you, if you work in any company in America, big company, you'll find some things that they're doing that aren't all that efficient either. Are there some Federal workers who do boneheaded things? Absolutely. I remember the first week I was on the job, I talked to my Defense Secretary, Bob Gates, who's older

and had been there a long time. I said, do you have advice for me, Bob? He says, one thing you should know, Mr. President, is that at any given moment, on any given day, somebody in the Federal Government is screwing up. [*Laughter*] Which is true, because there are 2 million employees. Somebody out there—if 99 percent of the folks are doing the right thing and only 1 percent aren't, that's still a lot of people.

So my job as President, working with Congress, is to make sure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and efficiently. We shouldn't be wasting a dime. And where we see waste, where we see things not working the way they should—like recently, these long waits for folks trying to get in the VA health care program—we've got to crack down, and we've got to reform it. But we can't paint in a broad brush and just say somehow stuff is not working. Because even in the VA health care system, once people get in, the quality of care, the satisfaction rates for customers are actually better than in private sector health care. So we can't generalize like this.

Now, the last point I'll make—going to your question—Federal workers generally have not gotten raises. And you remember during the Government shutdown, they were getting pressed—having to pay bills like everybody else, but not having a paycheck coming in. It's very disruptive for them. And these—what's called sequestration and furloughs meant that they might only be able to come to work 3 days a week instead of the full 5. And this all put a strain on their budgets.

We've been able to stabilize it, but when we go into the budget talks with Republicans next year, we may go through some of the same problems, in part because the other side has said they want to cut funding for education; they've said that they want to cut support for vulnerable families; they want to cut Medicaid, which would have an impact on the elderly and families that have folks with disabilities. And I've said no.

I've said why would I—by the way, the deficit has come down by more than half since I came into office. It hasn't gone up. Federal spending has not gone up. The deficit has gone down. And if we want to do more to reduce the deficit further, why am I going to take it out on the most vulnerable in our society and programs we need to grow when we've got a tax system where you've got corporations taking advantage of loopholes—in some cases, they're paying no taxes, when a teacher or a secretary are paying taxes themselves? Why wouldn't I close those loopholes first to generate additional revenues before I started cutting education spending or spending on basic research?

It will be a tough negotiation just because everything is a tough negotiation in Washington right now, which, I guess, brings me just to my last point. I don't watch TV news generally, or cable shows, but I suspect, if you're out here and going to work and picking up your kids and taking them to soccer, or at night sitting there paying the bills, and you just turn on the TV, sometimes, it must feel kind of discouraging because it doesn't feel like what's being talked about in Washington has anything to do with what's going on in your lives day to day. And it must feel as if sometimes you're just forgotten.

And sometimes, the news that's being reported on is really important. I mean, what's happening in Iraq is relevant. We've got to pay attention to the threats that are emanating from the chaos in the Middle East. Although, I want to be very clear we're not sending combat troops into Iraq, because that's—[*applause*]—we've done that, and we've given them an opportunity. And they're going to have to contribute to solving their own problems here. Although, we'll protect our people, and we'll make sure that we're going after terrorists who could do us harm.

But sometimes the news that's coming off is just—these are just Washington fights. They're fabricated issues. They're phony scandals that are generated. It's all geared towards the next election or ginning up a base. It's not on the level. And that must feel frustrating, and it makes people cynical, and it makes people turned off from the idea that anything can get done.

And if I've got one message today, it's the same message that I gave to that young mom that I mentioned who I had lunch with before I

came here, who wrote me a letter just talking about how she had done everything right, her and her husband, and she's working hard and raising two beautiful kids, and she has a great life, but it's a struggle, and wondering if anybody in Washington knows it. What I told her is the same thing I want to tell all of you, which is, I know it. You're the reason I ran for office. You're—[*applause*]—no, no, I'm not looking for applause. I want to make this point. I grew up not in tough circumstances, but I was you guys. Somebody out here is going through what my mom went through. Somebody out here is growing through what my grandma went through. Somebody out here is going through what Michelle and I went through when we were first married and our kids were first born. It's not like I forget. That was just 20 years ago that we were trying to figure out how to buy our first home. It was just 10 years ago when we finished off paying our student loans.

You guys are the reason I ran. You're who I'm thinking about every single day. And just because it's not reported in the news, I don't want you to think that I'm not fighting for you. And I'm not always going to get it done as fast as I want, because right now we've got a Congress that's dysfunctional. And I'll be honest with you, you've got a party on the other side whose only rationale—motivation seems to be opposing me.

But despite all that, we're making progress. Despite all that, some folks have health care that didn't have it before. Despite all that, some students are able to afford their education better. Despite all that, some folks have jobs that didn't have it. Despite all that, the Green Line got built here in Minnesota. Despite all that, we can make life a little better for American families who are doing their best, working hard, meeting their responsibilities.

And I don't want you to ever forget that. And I don't want you to be cynical. Cynicism is popular these days, but hope is better.

Thanks, everybody. All right. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. at Minnehaha Park. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Christopher B. Coleman of Saint Paul, MN; Mayor Betsy A. Hodges of Minneapolis, MN; St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler, her husband Ben Erler, and their sons Jack and Henry; 2014 White House Science Fair participant Elana Simon of New York City and her parents Sanford Simon and Rachael Migler; and Lilly Ledbetter, former employee, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. plant in Gadsden, AL. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Statement on Elections in Libya
June 26, 2014

I congratulate the Libyan people on the conclusion of the elections for a new Council of Representatives, a milestone in their courageous efforts to transition from four decades of dictatorship toward a full democracy. While yesterday's vote demonstrates the power of individual Libyans in determining their future, we recognize that elections are just one step in Libya's broader democratic transition. Libya's new Government must now focus on building consensus to address the challenges of establishing security, providing effective public services, and ensuring an inclusive political process. The United States calls on all parties to renounce violence and resolve differences through political dialogue and participation in the democratic process. The United States was proud to support the Libyan people in the darkest days of their revolution and through their efforts to end the Qadhafi regime, and we remain committed to supporting the Libyan people as they work to lay the foundations of a democratic society during this challenging yet historic time.

Statement on the Death of Former Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr.
June 26, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to hear about the passing of Howard Baker. Howard was many things over the course of his career, from Senate Majority Leader to White House Chief of Staff to Ambassador. Yet it was his ability to broker compromise and his unofficial role as the "Great Conciliator" that won him admirers across party lines, over multiple generations, and beyond the State he called home. Over an 18-year Senate career, Howard fought for the people of Tennessee and helped lead America through difficult times. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Howard's wife Nancy and the entire Baker family.

NOTE: The statement referred to former Sen. Nancy Kassebaum Baker, wife of former Sen. Baker.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to Iraq
June 26, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As I reported on June 16, 2014, U.S. Armed Forces personnel have deployed to Iraq to provide support and security for U.S. personnel and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

I have since ordered further measures in response to the situation in Iraq. Specifically, as I announced publicly on June 19, I have ordered increased intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance that is focused on the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). I also ordered up to approximately 300 additional U.S. Armed Forces personnel in Iraq to assess how we can best train, advise, and support Iraqi security forces and to establish joint operations centers with Iraqi security forces to share intelligence and coordinate planning to confront the threat posed by ISIL. Some of these personnel were already in Iraq as part of the U.S. Embassy's Office of Security Cooperation, and others began deploying into Iraq on June 24. These forces will remain in Iraq until the security situation becomes such that they are no longer needed.

This action is being undertaken in coordination with the Government of Iraq and has been directed consistent with my responsibility to protect U.S. citizens both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments for Fiscal Year 2015
June 26, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Budget amendments for the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of State and Other International Programs (State/OIP) to fund Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). These amendments would provide $58.6 billion for DOD OCO activities, which is $20.9 billion less than the $79.4 billion placeholder for DOD OCO in the FY 2015 Budget. It would also provide $1.4 billion for State/OIP OCO activities, which is in addition to the $5.9 billion for State/OIP included in the FY 2015 Budget. Overall, these amendments would decrease the total OCO funding requested for FY 2015 by $19.5 billion.

Final decisions about the number and activities of U.S. forces in Afghanistan after December 2014 had not yet been made at the time the FY 2015 Budget was submitted. As a result, the Budget included a placeholder for DOD FY 2015 OCO funding equivalent to the amount requested in the FY 2014 Budget. The Administration noted in the FY 2015 Budget that after determining required force levels in Afghanistan, a Budget amendment updating the OCO request would be submitted to the Congress. The enclosed amendments include the necessary updates to the OCO request in order to fund military operations in Afghanistan, a significant portion of the U.S. military presence around the Middle East, the Administration's proposed Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund and European Reassurance Initiative, and State/OIP peacekeeping costs in the Central African Republic.

The details of these amendments are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Minneapolis, Minnesota
June 26, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. This is a rowdy crowd. [*Laughter*]

So, obviously, first and foremost, I want to thank Sam and Sylvia. It is true that the last time I was in this house, I had no gray hair. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. And many people could not pronounce my name. [*Laughter*] But Sam and Sylvia, and some of you who are here tonight took a flyer on me.

And Minnesota actually really did have a lot to do with my deciding to run. There are a few charter members of the "Draft Obama" club, along with R.T., who started—who decided I should run for President before I had decided I should run for President. And that's not surprising, because Minnesota has a history of putting confidence in people who represent a progressive tradition, and nobody represents that better than a man sitting right next to me, Mr. Walter Mondale. Thank you. We love Walter Mondale. Thank you so much.

Couple other people who are carrying on that tradition who are here and I just want to acknowledge very quickly. Your outstanding Senator—you've got two of them, one of them is here—Amy Klobuchar is here. Yay, Amy! Part of the extraordinary Minnesota delegation: Congressman Keith Ellison is here; Congresswoman Betty McCollum is here; Congressman Rick Nolan is here; and Congressman Tim Walz is here. Tim is getting a little too slim.

[*Laughter*] He's been working out too much, given that House gym a run for its money.

We also have somebody who has a thankless job and does it extraordinarily well, and that is the head of the DCCC, and we're very grateful to him, Steve Israel. Steve here? And finally, a person who—let me just say it—I love her. And I love her because she is tough and she's smart and she's fearless and she's in politics for the right reasons. And when she was Speaker of the House, she and I together got more done than any Congress since the 1960s. And I want her back with the gavel, and that's why we're here today—Nancy Pelosi. Nancy Pelosi.

[*At this point, a dog barked.*]

Yes! Got a few "Amens" there from the dog. [*Laughter*] So I'm going to make very brief remarks at the top so I can take some questions and have some fun.

I had lunch today with a young woman named Rebekah who had written me a letter, I guess, a couple of months ago. And I get 40,000 pieces of correspondence today; we have an entire office that's assigned to process it, and they select for me 10 letters a day that I read every night. And they're from all across the country and people of every background, and it's on every topic. And purposely, they're not just supposed to be just, "Oh, Mr. President, you're doing such a great job." We get Tea Party letters in the packets, and, "You're the worst President ever," and I sometimes write back to those folks and say, "Well, thank you so much for your letter"—[*laughter*]—"and I'm not running again, so you don't have to worry about that."

But Rebekah sent me this letter, and it moved me. Because her story—she's 35 years old. She's got a 5-year-old and a 3-year-old. She and her husband married about 6, 7 years ago; he was in—he was a carpenter, he was in contracting. He had a good job. Housing market plummets, loses his job. Gets another job. Gets injured on the job, they accumulate some debt, that job is lost. There are suggestions that maybe they should file for bankruptcy; he says no, we've got these debts, we're going to pay them. He gets another job with the railroads, which require him to be away basically 4 or 5 days a week while she's taking care of two kids. She goes back to school to get an accounting degree so that she can get a better job; manages her classes as smartly as she can, but still ends up with $12,000 worth of debt. She gets a job at the accounting firm, he gets a new job, although at a significantly lower pay, back in construction, and he can be with the family more.

And the essence of the letter was, you know, I have a great life, she says. I have a beautiful family. We're healthy. We take advantage of the great parks in Minnesota, and we take advantage of a wonderful community and neighbors and friends. So I'm not looking for pity, but I work really hard, and my husband works even harder. And we've done everything right, and it still feels like at the end of the month, because of childcare costs and because of student loans and the fact that we don't get raises really, it's just really hard. And I just want you to know, Mr. President, that we're out here and that I believe in you and I know you care about us, but sometimes, it doesn't feel like what's happening in our lives is ever being discussed in Washington, and I want you to know that we're out here and we have faith in you, but we're losing faith a little bit in the system.

And so I met—I had lunch with her today at a burger place—Jucy Lucy's—which was a very good burger, tasty burger. And she could not have been more wonderful. The spirit of dignity and optimism and kindness that had come through in the letter, it was just embodied in her. She was lovely, and we had a good time.

But it reminded me, as it often reminds me when I get out of Washington, why we do this stuff in the first place. And I told her this. I said, you may not hear it because the press will not report it, the only reason I'm in politics is because of you. It's folks like you. Because when I see you, I see my mother, who wasn't lucky enough to have such a great husband, raising two kids on her own trying to go back to school and work at the same time; and when I see you, I'm reminded of when Michelle and I were starting off early on, and Michelle calling

me in tears because we had just lost the nanny and we had no idea whether we were going to be able to replace her with somebody; and when I see you, I think about friends of mine who have lost their jobs and had to reinvent themselves, and how hard that was, but that they kept on plugging away at it.

And the only reason I'm in politics is because I remember all of that. And it wasn't that long ago when I was trying to figure out some of the same things you're figuring out: how do you lead a good life and raise your kids, not looking to get wildly wealthy, not trying to have more than you need, but just be able to make ends meet and enjoy your family and, hopefully, retire with some security and be able to look back on a life that was worth living.

And that's what we should be talking about every day in Washington. And we should be able to act on that every day in Washington. And we don't. We talk about everything else. We talk about everything that doesn't have to do with that young woman.

We talk about phony scandals, and we talk about Benghazi, and we talk about polls, and we talk about the Tea Party, and we talk about the latest controversy that Washington has decided is important, and we don't talk about her.

And so I hope the reason you're here tonight is because you remember what this is supposed to be about. I know Nancy Pelosi does. I know the delegation that's here, they remember what this is supposed to be about and that that's worth fighting for. And we don't have time for cynicism, and we don't have time for discouragement, because she's still there doing everything she's supposed to do, and all she's looking for is somebody who's got her back a little bit.

And so when we talk about minimum wage or we talk about early childhood education or we talk about reinvesting in infrastructure to put folks back to work or we talk about equal pay for equal work or we talk about paid family leave or whatever the issues that you hear us promoting, they're in service to her. And the other side has nothing to offer her except cynicism and fear and frustration. And sometimes, we just take that for granted, and we shouldn't.

Other people can—Steve can tell you about the 17 seats we need, and they can tell you about all the polls and what we need to do to win and how we message things and what's been poll tested. All that stuff is important. We've got to be good at that. But in the end, what matters is, how hard are we fighting for the folks that sent us and the people who in most cases inspired us to get into politics in the first place?

That's what this is about. And it's useful for us to remember that, because if we do, we're going to win, because we actually have something to offer that young lady. And if she wins, then the country wins, and our kids and our grandkids win. So I hope all of you remember that. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:26 p.m. at the residence of Sam and Sylvia Kaplan. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis, MN; former Vice President Walter F. Mondale; and St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler, her husband Ben Erler, and their sons Jack and Henry. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Minneapolis, Minnesota
June 27, 2014

The President. Hello, Minneapolis! How is everybody doing today? You look good. It is good to see all of you. I miss Minneapolis. I missed you guys. Go ahead and have a seat, I'm going to be talking for a while. [*Laughter*]

So we've got some wonderful folks here today. I want to acknowledge a few of them. First of all, your outstanding Governor, Mark Dayton. Your wonderful Senators, Al Franken and Amy Klobuchar. Congressman Keith Ellison.

Your mayor, Betsy Hodges. And all of you are here, and that's special.

I want to thank Rebekah for not just the introduction and for sharing her story, but for letting me hang out with her and her family for the last couple of days. I really like her. [*Laughter*] I—and her husband is, like, the husband of the year. Generally, you don't want your wife to meet Rebekah's husband, because she'll be, like, well, why don't you do that? [*Laughter*] Why aren't you like that?

I've been wanting to visit a place where all the women are strong and the men are good looking and the children above average. And this clearly is an example of what Minnesota produces. So yesterday Rebekah and I had lunch at Matt's Bar. Yes, had a "Jucy Lucy," which was quite tasty. We had a town hall at Minnehaha Park, although I did not take a kayak over the falls, which seemed dangerous. [*Laughter*] We got ice cream at Grand Ole Creamery—very good, very tasty.

And then this morning Al Franken and I and Secretary Tom Perez, our Secretary of Labor, who's here—Tom, stand up—[*applause*]—we stopped by a community organization that helps with a lot of job programs and job placement programs. And this program in particular was focused on young moms. It was really interesting talking to them, because these are teenage mothers, 16 to 18, and it was a great pleasure for me to be able to say to all of them that my mom was a teenage mom and she was 18 when she had me and to be able to say to all of them that here in this country, it is possible for the child of a teenage mom, a single mom, to end up being President of the United States. And I think that it maybe gave them something to think about.

So you guys have been great hosts, Minnesota.

Audience member. Yeah! Thank you!

The President. You're welcome. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. [*Laughter*]

Now, so I want to give you a sense of how this visit came up. As some of you know, every day we get tens of thousands of correspondence at the White House. And we have a big correspondence office, and every night, the folks who manage the correspondence office select 10 letters for me to read.

And the job of these letters is not to just puff me up, so it's not like they only send me letters saying, Mr. President, you're doing great. [*Laughter*] Sometimes, the letters say thank you for something I may have done. Sometimes, the letters say, you are an idiot and the worst President ever. And most of the stories, though, are stories of hardship or hard-won success or hopes that haven't been met yet. Some appreciate a position that I may have taken; some disagree with what I'm doing. Some consider policies like the Affordable Care Act to be socialism; some tell stories about the difference that same policy may have made in folks' lives.

So I'm getting a good sample of what's happening around the country. And last month, three young girls wrote to me that boys aren't fair because they don't pass the ball in gym class. [*Laughter*] So there's a wide spectrum—and I'm going to prepare an Executive order on that.

But the letter that Rebekah sent stood out, first of all, because she's a good writer, and also because she's a good person. And the story that she told me reminded Michelle and I of some of our own experiences when we were their—Rebekah and her husband's age. And in many ways, her story for the past 5 years is our story, it's the American story.

In early 2009, Rebekah and Ben, her husband, they were newly married, expecting their first son Jack. She was waiting tables; he was in construction. Like millions of middle class families who got hammered by the great recession—the worst recession since the Great Depression—life was about to get pretty hard. "If only we had known," she wrote, "what was about to happen to the housing and construction market."

Ben's business dried up. But as a new husband and dad, he did what he had to, so he took whatever jobs he could, even if it forced him to be away from his family for days at a time. Rebekah realized she needed to think about how her career would unfold, so she took out student loans and enrolled in Saint

Paul College and retrained for a new career as an accountant.

And it's been a long, hard road for them. They had to pay off debt. They had to sacrifice for their kids and for one another. But then last year, they were able to buy their first home, and they've got a second son. And they love where they work, and Ben's new job lets him to be home for dinner each night. And so what Rebekah wrote was: "It's amazing what you can bounce back from when you have to. We're a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times."

And that describes the American people. We too are a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times. And today, over the past 51 months, our businesses have created 9.4 million new jobs. Our housing market is rebounding. Our auto industry is booming. Our manufacturing sector is adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. We've made our Tax Code fairer. We've cut our deficits by more than half. More than 8 million Americans have signed up for private insurance plans through the Affordable Care Act. So here in Minnesota, you can now say that the women are strong, the men are good looking, the children are above average, and 95 percent of you are insured.

And it's thanks to the hard work of citizens like Rebekah and Ben and so many of you that we've come farther, we've recovered faster, than just about any other advanced economy on Earth. More and more companies are deciding that the world's number-one place to create jobs and invest is once again the United States of America. That's the good news. And you don't hear it very often.

By every economic measure, we are better off now than we were when I took office. You wouldn't know it, but we are. We've made some enormous strides. But that's not the end of the story. We have more work to do.

It wasn't the end of Rebekah's story, because she went on to write in her letter: "We did everything right. The truth is, in America, where two people have done everything they can to succeed and fight back from the brink of financial ruin—through job loss and retraining and kids and credit card debts that are set up to keep you impoverished forever and the discipline to stop spending any money on yourselves or take a vacation in 5 years—it's virtually impossible to live a simple middle class life." That's what Rebekah wrote. Because their income is eaten up by childcare for Jack and Henry that costs more each month than their mortgage. And as I was telling Rebekah, Michelle and I, when we were their age, we had good jobs, and we still had to deal with childcare issues and couldn't figure out how to some months make ends meet.

They forego vacations so they can afford to pay off student loans and save for retirement. "Our big splurge," Rebekah wrote, "is cable TV so we can follow our beloved Minnesota Wild and watch Team U.S.A. in the Olympics!" They go out once a week for pizza or a burger. But they're not splurging. And at the end of the month, things are tight. And this is, like, this wonderful young couple, with these wonderful kids, who are really working hard.

And the point is, all across this country, there are people just like that, all in this audience. You're working hard, you're doing everything right. You believe in the American Dream. You're not trying to get fabulously wealthy. You just wanted a chance to build a decent life for yourselves and your families, but sometimes, it feels like the odds are rigged against you.

And I think sometimes what it takes for somebody like Rebekah to sit down and write one of these letters. And I believe that even when it's heartbreaking and it's hard, every single one of those letters is by definition an act of hope.

Because it's a hope that the system can listen, that somebody is going to hear you; that even when Washington sometimes seems tone deaf to what's going on in people's lives and around kitchen tables, that there's going to be somebody who's going to stand up for you and your family.

And that's why I came here, because I wanted to let Rebekah know and I wanted to let all of you know that—because you don't see it on TV sometimes. It's not what the press and the

pundits talk about. I'm here to tell you I'm listening, because you're the reason I ran for President. Because those stories are stories I've lived. The same way that when I saw those young teenage moms, I thought of my mother. And when I see Rebekah and Ben, I think of our struggles when Malia and Sasha were young. And they're not distant from me and everything we do.

I ran for President because I believe this country is at its best when we're all in it together and when everybody has a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share. And the reason I believe that is because that's how I came here. That's how I got here. That's how Michelle and I were able to succeed. And I haven't forgotten.

And so even though you may not read about it or see it on TV all the time, our agenda, what we're fighting for every day, is designed not to solve every problem, but to help just a little bit. To create more good jobs that pay good wages, jobs in manufacturing and construction and energy and innovation. That's why we're fighting to train more workers to fill those jobs. That's why we're fighting to guarantee every child a world-class education, including early childhood education and better childcare. That's why we're fighting to make sure hard work pays off with a wage you can live on and savings you can retire on and making sure that women get paid the same as men for the same job and folks have flexibility to look after a sick child or a sick parent.

That's what we're fighting for. We're fighting so everybody has a chance. We're fighting to vindicate the idea that no matter who you are or what you look like or how you grew up or who you love or who your parents were or what your last name is, it doesn't matter; America is a place where if you're doing the right thing, like Ben and Rebekah are, and you're being responsible and you're taking care of your family, that you can make it.

And the fact is, we can do that. If we do the—some basic things, if we make some basic changes, we can create more jobs and lift more incomes and strengthen the middle class. And that's what we should be doing. And I know it drives you nuts that Washington isn't doing it. And it drives me nuts. And the reason it's not getting done is, today, even basic, commonsense ideas can't get through this Congress.

No—and sometimes, I'm supposed to be politic about how I say things—[*laughter*]—but I'm finding lately that I just want to say what's on my mind. So let me just be clear—think—I want you think about this: So far this year, Republicans in Congress have blocked or voted down every single serious idea to strengthen the middle class. Now, you may think I'm exaggerating; let me go through the list. They've said no to raising the minimum wage. They've said no to fair pay. Some of them have denied that there's even a problem, that—despite the fact that women are getting paid 77 cents for every dollar a man is getting paid.

They've said no to extending unemployment insurance for more than 3 million Americans who are out there looking every single day for a new job, despite the fact that we know it would be good not just for those families who are working hard to try to get back on their feet, but for the economy as a whole. Rather than invest in working families getting ahead, they actually voted to give another massive tax cut to the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. They—don't boo, by the way. I want you to vote. But—[*laughter*]. I mean, over and over again, they show that they'll do anything to keep in place systems that really help folks at the top, but don't help you. And they don't seem to mind. And their obstruction is keeping a system that is rigged against families like Ben's and Rebekah's.

Now, I'm not saying these are all bad people; they're not. I—when I'm sitting there just talking to them about family, we get along just fine. Many of them will acknowledge when I talk to them, "Yes, I know, I wish we could do something more, but I can't." But they can't be too friendly towards me because they'd be run out of town by the Tea Party. [*Laughter*]

But sometimes, I get a sense, they just don't know what most folks are going through. They keep on offering a theory of the economy

that's, time and again, failed for the middle class. They think we should give more tax breaks to those at the top. They think we should invest less in things like education. They think we should let big banks and credit card companies and polluters and insurers do only whatever is best for their bottom line without any responsibility to anybody else. They want to drastically reduce or get rid of the safety net for people trying to work their way into the middle class.

And if we did all these things, they think the economy will thrive and jobs will prosper and everything will trickle down.

And just because they believe it, it doesn't mean the rest of us should be believing it, because we've tried what they're peddling, and it doesn't work. We know from our history that our economy does not grow from the top down, it grows from the middle out. We do better when the middle class does better. We do better when workers are getting a decent salary. We do better when they've got decent benefits. We do better when some—we do better when a young family knows that they can get ahead. And we do better when people who are working hard know that they can count on decent childcare at an affordable cost and that they, if they get sick, they're not going to lose their homes.

We do better when if somebody is stuck in a job that is not paying well enough, they know they can go get retrained without taking on huge mountains of debt. That's when things hum. And with just a few changes in priorities, we could get a lot of that done right now if Congress would actually just think about you and not about getting reelected, not about the next election, not about some media sound bite, but just focus on you.

So that's why I've said, look, I want to work with Democrats and Republicans. My favorite President, by the way, is—was the first Republican President, a guy named Abraham Lincoln. So I'm not—this is not a statement about partisanship. This is a statement about America and what we're fighting for. And I'm not going to let gridlock and inaction and willful indifference and greed threaten the hard work of families like yours. And so we can't afford to wait for Congress right now. And that's why I'm going ahead and moving ahead without them wherever I can.

That's why I acted to raise more workers' wages by requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. That's why I acted to help nearly 5 million Americans make student loan payments cap those payments at 10 percent of their income. That's why I made sure more women have the protections they need to fight for a fair pay in the workplace. That's why we went ahead and launched new hubs to attract more high-tech manufacturing jobs to America.

And now, some of you may have read—so we take these actions, and then now Republicans are mad at me for taking these actions. They're not doing anything, and then they're mad that I'm doing something. I'm not sure which of the things I've done they find most offensive, but they've decided they're going to sue me for doing my job.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. [*Laughter*] I mean, I might have said in the heat of the moment during one of these debates, "I want to raise the minimum wage, so sue me when I do." [*Laughter*] But I didn't think they were going to take it literally.

But giving more working Americans a fair shot is not about simply what I can do, it's about what we can do together. So when Congress doesn't act, not only have I acted, I've also tried to rally others to help. I told CEOs and Governors and mayors and State legislatures, for example, they don't have to wait for Congress to raise the minimum wage. Go ahead and raise your workers' wages right now. And since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, 13 States and DC have raised theirs, including Minnesota, where more than 450,000 of your neighbors are poised to get a raise.

When Gap raised wages for its employees, job applications went up through the roof. It was good for business. I even got a letter from a proud mom right here in Minneapolis who just wanted me to know that her son starts his employees at $15 an hour, at Aaron's Green

Cleaning here in town. [*Applause*] There they are! So here—the letter said: "We are very proud of his people-centered business philosophy! Three cheers for a decent living wage!"

So we don't have to wait for Congress to do some good stuff. On Monday, we held the first-ever White House Summit on Working Families, and we heard from a lot of other families like Ben and Rebekah. They count on policies like paid leave and workplace flexibility to juggle everything. We had business owners who came and told me they became more profitable when they made family life easier for their employees.

So more companies are deciding that higher wages and workplace flexibility is good for business: reduces turnover, more productive workers, more loyal workers. More cities and States are deciding, this is good policy for families. So the only holdout standing in the way of change for tens of millions of Americans are some Republicans in Congress.

So—because I just want to be real blunt: If you watch the news, you'd just see, okay, Washington is a mess, and the basic attitude is, everybody is just crazy up there. And—but if you actually read the fine print, it turns out that the things you care about, right now Democrats are promoting. And we're just not getting enough help.

And my message to Republicans is: Join us. Get on board. If you're mad at me for helping people on my own, then why don't you join me and we'll do it together? [*Applause*] We'll do it together. I'm happy to share the credit. You're mad at me for doing some things to raise the minimum wage, let's pass a law, Republicans and Democrats giving America a raise.

If you're mad at me for taking executive action to make it easier for women to find out if they're not getting treated fairly in the workplace, let's do it together. You can share the credit. You're worried about me trying to fix a broken immigration system, let's hold hands and go ahead and make sure that this country continues to be a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. I want to work with you, but you've got to give me something. You've got to try to deliver something, anything.

They don't do anything—[*laughter*]—except block me. And call me names. And it can't be that much fun. [*Laughter*] It'd be so much more fun if they said, you know what, let's do something together. If they were more interested in growing the economy for you and the issues that you're talking about, instead of trying to mess with me—[*laughter*]—then we'd be doing a lot better. That's what makes this country great, is when we're all working together. That's the American way.

Now more than ever, with the Fourth of July next week, Team U.S.A. moving on down in Brazil, we should try to rally around some economic patriotism that says we rise or fall as one Nation and one people. Let's rally around the idea that instead of giving tax breaks for millionaires, let's give more tax breaks for working families to help pay for childcare or college.

Instead of protecting companies that are shifting profits overseas to avoid paying their fair share, let's put people to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our airports. Let's invest in manufacturing startups so that we're creating good jobs making products here in America, here in Minnesota. Rather than stack the deck in favor of those who have already got an awful lot, let's help folks who have huge talent and potential and ingenuity, but just need a little bit of a hand up so that we can tap the potential of every American.

I mean, this isn't rocket science. So there are some things that are complicated; this isn't one of them. Let's make sure every 4-year-old in America has access to high school—high-quality preschool, so that moms like Rebekah and dads like Ben know their kids are getting the best quality care and getting a head start on life. Let's redesign our high schools to make sure that our kids are better prepared for the 21st-century economy. Let's follow the lead of Senator Franken and Secretary Perez and give more apprenticeships that connect young people to rewarding careers.

Let's tell every American, if they've lost their job because it was shipped overseas, we're going to train you for an even better one. Let's rally around the patriotism that says our country is stronger when every American can

count on affordable health insurance and Medicare and Social Security and women earn pay equal to their efforts and family can make ends meet if their kid gets sick and when nobody who works full time is living in poverty. We can do all these things.

And so let me just—let me wrap up by saying this. I know sometimes things get kind of discouraging. And I know that our politics looks profoundly broken and Washington looks like it's never going to deliver for you. It seems like they're focused on everything but your concerns. And I know that when I was elected in 2008 and then reelected in 2012, so many of you were hoping that we could get Washington to work differently, and sometimes, when I get stymied, you'd think, oh, maybe not; maybe it's just too tough, maybe things won't change. And I get that frustration. And the critics and the cynics in Washington, they've written me off more times than I can count.

But I'm here to tell you, don't get cynical. Despite all of the frustrations, America is making progress. Despite the unyielding opposition, there are families who have health insurance now who didn't have it before. And there are students in college who couldn't afford it before. And there are workers on the job who didn't have jobs before. And there are troops home with their families after serving tour after tour. Don't think that we're not making progress.

So yes, it's easy to be cynical; in fact, these days it's kind of trendy. Cynicism passes off for wisdom. But cynicism doesn't liberate a continent. Cynicism doesn't build a transcontinental railroad. Cynicism doesn't send a man to the Moon. Cynicism doesn't invent the Internet. Cynicism doesn't give women the right to vote. Cynicism doesn't make sure that people are treated equally regardless of race.

Cynicism is a choice, and hope is a better choice. And every day, I'm lucky to receive thousands of acts of hope, every time somebody sits down and picks up a pen and writes to me and shares their story, just like Rebekah did. And Rebekah said in her letter—she ended it, she said: "I'm pretty sure this is a silly thing to do to write a letter to the President, but on some level, I know that staying silent about what you see and what needs changing never makes any difference. So I'm writing to you to let you know what it's like for us out here in the middle of the country, and I hope you will listen."

And I'm here because Rebekah wrote to me and I want her to know I'm listening. I'm here as President, because I want you all to know that I'm listening. I ran for office to make sure that anybody who is working hard to meet their dreams has somebody in Washington that is listening. And I'm always going to keep listening. And I'm always going to keep fighting.

And your cares and your concerns are my own, and your hopes for your kids and your grandkids are my own. And I'm always going to be working to restore the American Dream for everybody who's willing to work for it. And I am not going to get cynical; I'm staying hopeful, and I hope you do too.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. at the Lake Harriet Band Shell. In his remarks, he referred to St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler, her husband Ben Erler, and their sons Jack and Henry; and Aaron Barnell, founder, Aaron's Green Cleaning.

Statement on the Observance of Ramadan
June 27, 2014

On behalf of the American people, Michelle and I extend our best wishes to Muslim communities here in the United States and around the world on the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadan.

A time for self-reflection and devotion through prayer and fasting, Ramadan is also an occasion when Muslims around the world reaffirm their commitment to helping the less fortunate, including those struggling because of

economic hardship and inequality. Here in the United States, we are grateful to the many Muslim American organizations, individuals, and businesses that are devoted to creating opportunity for all by working to reduce income inequality and poverty, not only through their charitable efforts, but also through their initiatives to empower students, workers, and families with the education, skills, and health care they deserve.

Ramadan also reminds us of our shared responsibility to treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves and the basic principles that bind people of different faiths together: a yearning for peace, justice, and equality. At a moment when too many people around the world continue to suffer from senseless conflict and violence, this sacred time reminds us of our common obligations to pursue justice and peace and to uphold the dignity of every human being.

As I've done every year as President, I look forward to welcoming Muslim Americans from across the United States to the White House for an iftar dinner. It will be another opportunity for me to convey America's appreciation for the contributions of Muslim Americans to our country and to wish Muslims around the world a month blessed with the joys of family, community, peace, and understanding. *Ramadan Kareem.*

The President's Weekly Address
June 28, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, I spent a couple of days in Minneapolis, talking with people about their lives: their concerns, their successes, and their hopes for the future.

I went because of a letter I received from a working mother named Rebekah, who shared with me the hardships her young family had faced since the financial crisis. She and her husband Ben were just newlyweds expecting their first child Jack when the housing crash dried up his contracting business. He took what jobs he could, and Rebekah took out student loans and retrained for a new career. They sacrificed for their kids and for each other. And 5 years later, they've paid off their debt, bought their first home, and had their second son Henry.

In her letter to me, she wrote, "We are a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times." And in many ways, that's America's story these past 5 years. We are a strong, tight-knit family that's made it through some very tough times. Today, over the past 51 months, our businesses have created 9.4 million new jobs. By measure after measure, our economy is doing better than it was 5 years ago.

But as Rebekah also wrote in her letter, there are still too many middle class families like hers who do everything right—who work hard and who sacrifice—but can't seem to get ahead. It feels like the odds are stacked against them. And with just a small change in our priorities, we could fix that.

The problem is, Republicans in Congress keep blocking or voting down almost every serious idea to strengthen the middle class. This year alone, they've said no to raising the minimum wage, no to fair pay, no to student loan reform, no to extending unemployment insurance. And rather than invest in education that helps working families get ahead, they actually voted to give another massive tax cut to the wealthiest Americans.

This obstruction keeps the system rigged for those at the top and rigged against the middle class. And as long as they insist on doing it, I'm going to keep taking actions on my own, like the actions I've already taken to attract new jobs, lift workers' wages, and help students pay off their loans. I intend do my job. And if it makes Republicans in Congress mad that I'm trying to help people out, then I welcome them to join me so we can do it together.

The point is, we could do so much more as a country—as a strong, tight-knit family—if Republicans in Congress were less interested in stacking the deck for those at the top—or ob-

structing me—and more interested in growing the economy for everybody.

So rather than more tax breaks for millionaires, let's give more tax breaks to help working families pay for childcare or college. Rather than protecting tax loopholes that let big corporations set up tax shelters overseas, let's put people to work rebuilding roads and bridges right here in America. Rather than stack the deck in favor of those who've already succeeded, let's realize that we are stronger as a nation when we offer a fair shot to every American.

I'm going to spend some time talking about these very choices in the weeks ahead. That's because we know from our history that our economy does not grow from the top down, it grows from the middle out. We do better when the middle class does better. That's the American way. That's what I believe in. And that's what I'll keep fighting for.

Have a great Fourth of July, everybody. And good luck to Team U.S.A. down in Brazil.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:25 p.m. on June 27 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on June 28. In the address, the President referred to St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler, her husband Ben Erler, and their sons Jack and Henry. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 27, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 28.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Michelle Bachelet Jeria of Chile
June 30, 2014

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome back to the Oval Office President Bachelet. She is my second favorite Michelle. [*Laughter*] And I'm very much pleased to see her again. We had the opportunity to work together when I first came into office. Since that time, President Bachelet has been extraordinarily busy doing excellent work at the United Nations, particularly around women, an issue that the United States has been very supportive of. And we're very proud of the work that she did there.

She's now back in office, and it gives us an opportunity to just strengthen further the outstanding relationship between the United States and Chile.

Let me say, first of all, congratulations to the Chilean national football team for an outstanding showing at the World Cup. I know it was a tough loss, but it also showed the incredible skill and talent of the Chilean team. This is as well, I think, as it's ever done against a very tough Brazilian team on their home turf. And so congratulations to them. We play—coming up, we've got a tough match as well. So I want to wish the U.S. team a lot of luck in the game to come.

The basis for Chile's and the United States strong bilateral relationship includes the fact that we have a free trade agreement that has greatly expanded commerce in both countries and has created jobs in both countries.

We have excellent cooperation when it comes to a wide range of issues: energy, education, people-to-people relations. Chile has been a model of democracy in Latin America. It's been able to consistently transition from center-left governments to center-right governments, but always respectful of democratic traditions. Obviously, those traditions were hard won, and President Bachelet knows as well as anybody how difficult it was to bring about democracy. And now the fact that Chile across the political spectrum respects and fights for the democratic process makes it a great model for the entire hemisphere.

Today we're going to have an opportunity to discuss how we can deepen those relationships even further. I know that education, for example, is an issue that is at the top of President Bachelet's agenda. It's something that's at the top of my agenda here in the United States. For us to be able to strengthen student exchanges and compare mechanisms and ideas for how we can build skills of young people in

both countries is something that we'll spend some time on.

We're both very interested in energy and how we can transition to a clean energy economy. And we'll be announcing some collaborations, including the facilitation of a construction of a major solar plant inside of Chile that can help meet their energy needs.

We'll talk about regional issues. Obviously, we've seen great progress in democratization throughout the region, in part because of Chile's leadership, but there are obviously still some hotspots that we have to try to address, as well as issues of security in areas like Central America and the Caribbean. And I'll be very interested in hearing President Bachelet's views.

And we'll discuss international issues. Chile, with its seat on the United Nations Security Council, can serve as a leader on a wide range of issues, from peacekeeping to conflict resolution, to important issues like climate change. And we have great confidence that in that role, Chile will continue to be a positive force for good around the world.

So I just want to say thank you for not only the friendship with President Bachelet, but more broadly, our friendship with the Chilean people. And President Bachelet's predecessor, he and I had an excellent relationship; she and I have had an excellent relationship. I think that indicates that it really goes beyond any particular party. I'm confident that my replacement after I'm gone will have an excellent relationship, because it's based on common values and a strong respect in both countries for the value of the U.S.-Chilean relationship.

So, welcome, and I look forward to an excellent conversation.

President Bachelet. Thank you, President Obama. I want to, first of all, thank your invitation to visit you and your country. And of course, we are looking forward to enhance our cooperation in many different areas.

As you just mentioned, Chile and the U.S. have had a very strong and mature relations for so many years, and we want to make it deeper and to enhance them in different areas. Of course, this will be a great opportunity, as you said, to discuss some of the regional and international issues, given the fact that we're also sitting at the Security Council. But also, we will be able to, in the bilateral dimension, be able to increase our cooperation in areas that are very sensible, and for the U.S. and for Chile, such as you mentioned: education, energy, science and technology, people-to-people relation.

We already have, as you know, a very good—also, I mean, not only the bilateral way, we also have a very good Chile-California and Chile-Massachusetts programs. We have been working very strongly, and we will continue on that path.

And we are really interested in—we, this year, I think we are commemorating 10 years of the free trade agreement from U.S. and Chile. And U.S. is our, I would say, our most important foreign investor. We want to continue in that path, and of course, we will have also the possibility of having activities with the Chamber of Commerce and others because we really want to make our relations in all dimensions—political, economical, social, et cetera—stronger and stronger every day.

So, very happy to be here with you again, and I'm sure this will be a great meeting.

President Obama. Okay. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Sebastián Piñera Echenique of Chile.

Remarks on Immigration Reform
June 30, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. One year ago this month, Senators of both parties—with support from the business community, labor, law enforcement, faith communities—came together to pass a commonsense immigration bill.

Independent experts said that bill would strengthen our borders, grow our economy, shrink our deficits. As we speak, there are enough Republicans and Democrats in the House to pass an immigration bill today. I would sign it into law today, and Washington would solve a problem in a bipartisan way.

But for more than a year, Republicans in the House of Representatives have refused to allow an up-or-down vote on that Senate bill or any legislation to fix our broken immigration system. And I held off on pressuring them for a long time to give House Speaker Boehner the space he needed to get his fellow Republicans on board.

Meanwhile, here's what a year of obstruction has meant. It's meant fewer resources to strengthen our borders. It's meant more businesses free to game the system by hiring undocumented workers, which punishes businesses that play by the rules and drives down wages for hard-working Americans. It's meant lost talent when the best and brightest from around the world come to study here, but are forced to leave and then compete against our businesses and our workers. It's meant no chance for 11 million immigrants to come out of the shadows and earn their citizenship if they pay a penalty and pass a background check, pay their fair share of taxes, learn English, and go to the back of the line. It's meant the heartbreak of separated families.

That's what this obstruction has meant over the past year. That's what the Senate bill would fix if the House allowed it to go to a vote.

Our country and our economy would be stronger today if House Republicans had allowed a simple yes-or-no vote on this bill or, for that matter, any bill. They'd be following the will of the majority of the American people who support reform. And instead, they've proven again and again that they're unwilling to stand up to the Tea Party in order to do what's best for the country. And the worst part about it is, a bunch of them know better.

We now have an actual humanitarian crisis on the border that only underscores the need to drop the politics and fix our immigration system once and for all. In recent weeks, we've seen a surge of unaccompanied children arrive at the border, brought here and to other countries by smugglers and traffickers.

The journey is unbelievably dangerous for these kids. The children who are fortunate enough to survive it will be taken care of while they go through the legal process, but in most cases, that process will lead to them being sent back home. I've sent a clear message to parents in these countries not to put their kids through this. I recently sent Vice President Biden to meet with Central American leaders and find ways to address the root causes of this crisis. Secretary Kerry will also be meeting with those leaders again tomorrow. With our international partners, we're taking new steps to go after the dangerous smugglers who are putting thousands of children lives at risk.

Today I sent a letter to congressional leaders asking that they work with me to address the urgent humanitarian challenge on the border and support the immigration and Border Patrol agents who already apprehend and deport hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants every year. And understand, by the way, for the most part, this is not a situation where these children are slipping through. They're being apprehended. But the problem is, is that our system is so broken, so unclear, that folks don't know what the rules are.

Now, understand, there are a number of Republicans who have been willing to work with us to pass real, commonsense immigration reform, and I want to thank them for their efforts. There are a number of Republican leaders in the Senate who did excellent work and deserve our thanks. And less visibly, there have been folks in the House who have been trying to work to get this done. And quietly, because it doesn't always help me to praise them, I've expressed to them how much I appreciate the efforts that they've made.

I believe Speaker Boehner when he says he wants to pass an immigration bill. I think he genuinely wants to get something done. But last week, he informed me that Republicans will continue to block a vote on immigration reform at least for the remainder of this year. Some in the House Republican Caucus are

using the situation with unaccompanied children as their newest excuse to do nothing. Now, I want everybody to think about that. Their argument seems to be that because the system is broken, we shouldn't make an effort to fix it. It makes no sense. It's not on the level. It's just politics, plain and simple.

Now, there are others in the Republican Caucus in the House who are arguing that they can't act because they're mad at me about using my executive authority too broadly. This also makes no sense. I don't prefer taking administrative action. I'd rather see permanent fixes to the issue we face. Certainly, that's true on immigration. I've made that clear multiple times. I would love nothing more than bipartisan legislation to pass the House, the Senate, land on my desk so I can sign it. That's true about immigration, that's true about the minimum wage, it's true about equal pay. There are a whole bunch of things where I would greatly prefer Congress actually do something. I take executive action only when we have a serious problem, a serious issue, and Congress chooses to do nothing. And in this situation, the failure of House Republicans to pass a darn bill is bad for our security, it's bad for our economy, and it's bad for our future.

So while I will continue to push House Republicans to drop the excuses and act—and I hope their constituents will too—America cannot wait forever for them to act. And that's why, today, I'm beginning a new effort to fix as much of our immigration system as I can on my own, without Congress. As a first step, I'm directing the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General to move available and appropriate resources from our interior to the border. Protecting public safety and deporting dangerous criminals has been and will remain the top priority, but we are going to refocus our efforts where we can to make sure we do what it takes to keep our border secure.

I have also directed Secretary Johnson and Attorney General Holder to identify additional actions my administration can take on our own, within my existing legal authorities, to do what Congress refuses to do and fix as much of our immigration system as we can. If Congress will not do their job, at least, we can do ours. I expect their recommendations before the end of summer, and I intend to adopt those recommendations without further delay.

Of course, even with aggressive steps on my part, administrative action alone will not adequately address the problem. The reforms that will do the most to strengthen our businesses, our workers, and our entire economy will still require an act of Congress. And I repeat: These are reforms that already enjoy the wide support of the American people. It's very rare where you get labor, business, evangelicals, law enforcement all agreeing on what needs to be done. And at some point, that should be enough. Normally, that is enough. The point of public service is to solve public problems. And those of us who have the privilege to serve have a responsibility to do everything in our power to keep Americans safe and to keep the doors of opportunity open.

And if we do, then 1 year from now, not only would our economy and our security be stronger, but maybe the best and the brightest from around the world who come study here would stay and create jobs here. Maybe companies that play by the rules will no longer be undercut by companies that don't. Maybe more families who have been living here for years, whose children are often U.S. citizens, who are our neighbors and our friends, and whose children are our kids' friends and go to school with them, and play on ball teams with them, maybe those families would get to stay together. But much of this only happens if Americans continue to push Congress to get this done.

So I've told Speaker Boehner that even as I take those steps that I can within my existing legal authorities to make the immigration system work better, I'm going to continue to reach out to House Republicans in the hope that they deliver a more permanent solution with a comprehensive bill. Maybe it will be after the midterms, when they're less worried about politics. Maybe it will be next year. Whenever it is, they will find me a willing partner. I have been consistent in saying that I am prepared to work with them even on a bill that I don't consider perfect. And the Senate bill

was a good example of the capacity to compromise and get this done. The only thing I can't do is stand by and do nothing while waiting for them to get their act together.

And I want to repeat what I said earlier. If House Republicans are really concerned about me taking too many executive actions, the best solution to that is passing bills. Pass a bill; solve a problem. Don't just say no on something that everybody agrees needs to be done. Because if we pass a bill, that will supplant whatever I've done administratively. We'll have a structure there that works, and it will be permanent. And people can make plans and businesses can make plans based on the law. And there will be clarity both here inside this country and outside it.

Let me just close by saying Friday is the Fourth of July. It's the day we celebrate our independence and all the things that make this country so great. And each year, Michelle and I host a few hundred servicemembers and wounded warriors and their families right here on the lawn for a barbecue and fireworks on the Mall.

And some of the servicemembers coming this year are unique because they signed up to serve, to sacrifice, potentially to give their lives for the security of this country even though they weren't yet Americans. That's how much they love this country. They were prepared to fight and die for an America they did not yet fully belong to. I think they've earned their stripes in more ways than one. And that's why on Friday morning we're going to naturalize them in a ceremony right here at the White House. This Independence Day will be their first day as American citizens.

And one of the things we celebrate on Friday, one of the things that make this country great, is that we are a nation of immigrants. Our people come from every corner of the globe. That's what makes us special. That's what makes us unique. And throughout our history, we've come here in wave after wave from everywhere understanding that there was something about this place where the whole was greater than the sum of its parts, that all the different cultures and ideas and energy would come together and create something new.

We won this country's freedom together. We built this country together. We defended this country together. It makes us special. It makes us strong. It makes us Americans. That's worth celebrating. And that's what I want not just House Republicans, but all of us as Americans, to remember.

Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:04 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks on the Nomination of Robert A. McDonald To Be Secretary of Veterans Affairs

June 30, 2014

The President. Let me start by thanking Acting Secretary Gibson for welcoming us here today. I am pleased to be joined by our Vice President, Joe Biden, from leaders across this Department, and our many partners, particularly representatives from our incredible veterans and military family service organizations.

I want to begin by making a basic point: Those of you who serve here at the VA do absolutely vital work every single day for our veterans and their families. I know how deeply you care about our veterans. Many of you are veterans yourselves: veterans serving veterans. You help them transition to civilian life, go to college, buy their first home, start a new business. You have some of the best doctors and nurses in the country and provide some of the best specialized health care. At our national cemeteries, you lay our veterans to rest with dignity and compassion. I know that millions of veterans are profoundly grateful for the good work that you do. And I am grateful as well.

But we're here today because of problems that have outraged us all. That includes the

inexcusable conduct that we've seen at too many VA health care facilities. So I'm here for two reasons: to update you and the American people on how we're fixing these problems and to announce my choice for the next Secretary of Veterans Affairs to help move us forward.

The first thing everyone should know is that those responsible for manipulating or falsifying records at the VA—and those who tolerated it—are being held accountable. Some officials have already been relieved of their duties. Investigations are continuing. And as I've said, where we find misconduct, it will be punished. And I've made it clear that I expect the VA's full cooperation with all the ongoing investigations into wrongdoing.

Second, we've reached out to 135,000 veterans so far to get them off those wait lists and into clinics. We've added more staff, sent mobile medical units, and we're making it easier for veterans to use hospitals and clinics outside the VA. And we're going to keep at it until every one of our veterans is off a wait list and they receive the care that they have earned.

Third, we're moving ahead with urgent reforms at the Veterans Health Administration. That 14-day scheduling goal has been removed from employee evaluations so there is absolutely no incentive to engage in inappropriate behavior. Providing the highest quality care when our veterans need it, that's your incentive. There will be new measures of patient satisfaction from the veteran's perspective. And today's outdated VA scheduling system is going to be overhauled with the latest technology.

More broadly, the review that Rob Nabors conducted of the VHA found, and I'm quoting, "significant and chronic systemic failures," including too little responsiveness, transparency, and accountability. And that is totally unacceptable. It recommends that the VHA be "restructured and reformed" with stronger management, leadership and oversight, as well as more doctors and staff. And I totally agree, and we're going to make that happen.

I've asked Rob to remain at the VA for now to help move these reforms forward. Hiring of new VWA leaders has been frozen—VHA leaders has been frozen to make sure the new team we're putting in place is the right one. And based on the recommendations of our panel of experts, I will be nominating the next leader of the VHA. I want to get the very best leader on the job and get going on these reforms. And we're going to work with Congress to make sure that the VHA has more of the doctors and resources it needs to deliver the care that our veterans deserve.

Fourth, we're instituting a new culture of accountability. The very idea that senior VHA executives would receive bonuses this year rightly appalled many Americans. And those bonuses have already been canceled. A review is now underway to make sure that when employees speak up about a problem, action is taken, not to intimidate or retaliate against the employee, but actually to fix the problem. Everyone is going to be held accountable for doing better. And Congress can help by giving the Secretary more authority to remove senior leaders.

Finally, we're rebuilding our leadership team here at the VA. I want to thank Sloan and others here who have stepped up to serve in new roles during this critical time.

And I have to say, Sloan, you have been an outstanding driving force behind the reforms that are now underway. We'll be relying on your steady hand during this period of transition and through your continued service as Deputy Secretary. And I know all of you will have an outstanding partner and Secretary in my choice to lead the VA going forward: one of our Nation's most accomplished business leaders and managers, Robert McDonald.

Now, I've gotten to know Bob a bit over the years. He's come to the White House to share his perspectives as we've worked through complicated issues. He's no-nonsense. He's pragmatic. He does not seek the limelight. He repeats a Japanese saying—he worked and lived in Japan for 6 years while at Procter & Gamble. The saying goes: "He who climbs Mount Fuji is a wise man; he who climbs it twice is a fool." [*Laughter*] Now, Bob actually climbed Mount Fuji once. [*Laughter*] Bob is a wise man. [*Laughter*] And if you need any more evidence that he's wise, you need to meet Diane and his

family who are here today, because they are a wonderful family, and obviously, they've served along with him in the past.

For Bob and his family, the mission of caring for our veterans is deeply personal. His father served in the Army Air Corps after World War II. Diane's father was a POW. Her uncle was exposed to agent orange in Vietnam and still receives treatment from the VA. So this is not an abstract mission for them.

Bob is a veteran himself. He graduated from West Point, where he and Sloan were classmates, so this is a bit of a reunion. Bob served as an Army Ranger in the 82d Airborne Division. Back home in Cincinnati, he and Diane have teamed up with the USO to honor our veterans.

But what especially makes Bob the right choice to lead the VA right now is his three decades of experience in building and managing one of the world's most recognized companies, Procter & Gamble. The VA is not a business, but it is one of our largest departments: some 340,000 employees working in more than 1,700 facilities, serving nearly 9 million veterans. And the workload at the VHA alone is enormous: some 85 million appointments a year and some 25 million consultations.

As CEO of Procter & Gamble, Bob oversaw more than 120,000 employees, with operations around the world, selling products in more than 180 countries, in more than 2 million stores, reaching some 5 billion customers. In other words, he knows the key to any successful enterprise is staying focused on the people you're trying to serve. He's renowned for his operational excellence. He started his career out in the field and worked his way up, serving at virtually every level of Procter & Gamble. He understands that grand plans are not enough. What matters is the operations that you put in place and getting the job done.

Bob is an expert at making organizations better. In his career he's taken over struggling business units. He knows how to roll up his sleeves and gets to work: putting an end to what doesn't work, adopting best practices that do, restructuring, introducing innovations, making operations more efficient and effective. In short, he's about delivering better results.

He also knows the importance of building what he calls a "high-performance team," putting the right people in the right jobs, rewarding them when they do well, and holding them accountable when they do not.

And finally, Bob's known for his integrity. He's still guided by that cadet prayer from West Point: "Choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong." He served our country in uniform. He's now prepared to answer the call once more.

So let me state the obvious: This is not going to be an easy assignment. Bob knows that. But like any Army Airborne Ranger, Bob has a reputation for being ready, jumping into tough situations, taking charge, and going all the way. So, Bob, on behalf of all of us: To you, to Diane, and your family, thank you for your readiness to serve again.

My bottom line is this: We've got to change the way VA does business. Over the past 5 years, this agency has done some excellent work in dealing with a whole range of real difficult challenges. And I don't want people to forget that. We had—have had a huge influx of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. We have had—I think had to manage what was a good decision to make sure that folks who previously had difficulty accessing VA services were finally admitted, whether it was because they had PTSD or folks with cases previously of agent orange, all of which meant more people coming into the system. We have had to get up and running, and it's now—we're doing quite effectively work in terms of the post-9/11 GI bill to make sure that our young people are able to get the training they need after they leave the—our military.

So across the board, there's been some terrific work, but there's a lot more that has to be done. We've got to fix some things that are broken. And Sloan's started that process, but we're going to have to keep in driving until we get it done.

We've got to regain the trust of our veterans with a VA that is more effective, more efficient, and that truly puts veterans first. Bob is

the manager we need to help get this done. So I urge the Senate to confirm him as soon as possible.

I also urge the Senate to finally confirm my nominee for CFO, Helen Tierney; my nominee for Assistant Secretary for Policy, Linda Schwartz; my nominee to lead the Board of Veterans' Appeals, Constance Tobias. They have all been waiting and waiting and waiting for a vote, in Constance's case, for more than a year. We need them on the job now, and Congress needs to act and help us do right by our veterans.

And we've got to do right by veterans like Corporal Kyle Carpenter. Some of you may have seen the story of Kyle. I recently had the privilege of presenting Kyle with the Medal of Honor for his actions in Afghanistan where he used his body to shield his best friend from a grenade blast. Kyle spent 2½ years in the hospital. He endured nearly 40 surgeries to rebuild his body and his face, and he's gone through excruciating rehab. And to see him standing in the White House, strong and proud, receiving his Medal of Honor, was something I will never forget. It was an inspiration.

Today, Kyle is medically retired, so part of his journey of recovery has involved the VA. On the one hand, he's now in college and with the help of his VA educational benefits. And it's an example of the good work that the VA has done. On the other hand, his experience with VA health care has often been frustrating. He said it was okay that I share this with you today, so I just want to use Kyle as an example. Here is an American hero by any definition. Sometimes, we use that word too loosely. This guy is a hero and deserves everything we can do.

But like other veterans, Kyle sometimes had trouble just making an appointment or had to wait a month to see his doctor, only to be referred to another doctor and wait another 2 months for that appointment. He often felt like a number, he said, being passed between doctors, who sometimes didn't know his situation or why he needed certain medication. He's relied on the help of a patient advocate. But at so many steps along the way, it's just been a lot harder than it should have been. As his advocate said, it "shouldn't be this way."

So the VA does many things well, like delivering Kyle's educational benefits. And we need all of you to keep doing that important work, like reducing the disability claims backlog and improving care for posttraumatic stress and traumatic brain injury, building on the good work that's already been done in reducing homelessness among our veterans, helping veterans get their education under the post-9/11 GI bill, and helping find new civilian jobs so they can enjoy the American Dream they help to defend. And it's a good time to mention the great work that the VA has done with Jill Biden and Michelle in partnering with the private sector so that that transition from military to civilian life is a lot easier for our veterans.

But when it comes to delivering timely, quality health care, we have to do better. We have to do better for Kyle. We have to do better for all our wounded warriors. We have to do better for all our veterans, from all our wars. They're looking for us to fulfill Lincoln's pledge: to care for those who have borne the battle and for their families and survivors. I'm confident we can do that. And so long as I am President, we're going to keep doing everything in our power to uphold what is a sacred obligation.

With that, I want to invite Bob to say a few words. Thank you so much, Bob, for taking on this assignment.

Secretary-designate McDonald. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you so much.

Mr. President, thank you for your confidence in me that this nomination demonstrates. It would indeed be an honor and a privilege, if confirmed by the Senate, to serve as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve the lives of our country's veterans and to help change the way the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs does business.

Mr. President, in your remarks just now, you've made it clear what you expect: a VA that is more effective, more efficient, and that truly puts our veterans first. If confirmed by the Senate, my priority would be to lead that transformation.

My life's purpose has been to improve the lives of others. I went to West Point to be an officer in the Army to try to help free people who were living in nonfree societies. I became an Airborne Ranger Infantry Officer in the 82d Airborne Division because I wanted to be on the front line in leading that change. I joined the Procter & Gamble Company 34 years ago because of its purpose, which is to improve the lives of the world's consumers.

Mr. President, thank you for mentioning my father, Diane's father and uncle. Yes, for our family, taking care of our veterans is very personal. We need to put care for the veteran at the center of everything that we do at Veterans Affairs. At Procter & Gamble, we always focus on our customer. At the VA, the veteran is our customer, and we must all focus—all day, every day—on getting them the benefits and the care that they've so earned. That's the only reason we're here. I look forward to working with the dedicated men and women of the Veterans Affairs to accomplish this mission.

I'd like to thank my family for supporting me throughout my life, but especially during this next chapter. My wife Diane, my daughter Jenny, my son-in-law Scott, and my son Rob are all here today. My parents and Diane's mother could not attend today, but thank you for your love and support.

Thank you again, Mr. President. I look forward to working with you to transform Veterans Affairs to better serve our country's veterans.

Thank you.

The President. Good luck. You're going to do great.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:34 p.m. at the Department of Veterans Affairs. In his remarks, he referred to Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan D. Gibson; and Lance Cpl. Nicholas Eufrazio, USMC, who was wounded in combat in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, on November 21, 2010.

Remarks at a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month Reception

June 30, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Hey! Well, I want to thank Jim and Patrick. First of all, I think they supported me in my State senate campaign. [*Laughter*] So those were some early supporters, and we might not be here if it hadn't been for them. Congratulations on finally tying the knot after 51 years. I looked it up, and depending on how you count, the traditional gift for your next anniversary is either paper, for year 1, or whatever you want, because there is no traditional gift for 52 years. [*Laughter*] But I think it's so important to understand how rare relationships like yours are. And however you celebrate, we hope you have many, many more years together.

And then, with that, why don't you guys sit down, because that knee is acting up. [*Laughter*]

I want all of you to know how much it means to us for you to be able to join here at this year's pride celebration. We've got some terrific public servants who are here today, including our Secretary of Labor Tom Perez. Hey! We've got mayors, and we've got State legislators, and we've got LGBT members of my administration. We also have three judges that I was proud to name to the Federal bench: Todd Hughes, Judy Levy, and Nitza Quiñones Alejandro. Give them a big round of applause.

Before I took office, we had only one openly gay Federal judge to be confirmed by the Senate. Now, along with Todd, Judy, and Nitza, that number is 11. So we're making some progress.

Three other people I want to mention. First of all, Tobias Wolff, who's been advising me for—since my first Presidential campaign and has had a great impact on my administration and how we've thought about a bunch of issues. Please give Tobias a big round of applause.

Number two—a special treat for me—my college professor when I was a freshman in college at Occidental, Dr. Lawrence Goldyn is here. I want to just talk a little bit about Lawrence. When I went in as a freshman—this is 1979 at Occidental College—and according to Lawrence, I guess there were maybe a couple of other gay professors, but they weren't wildly open about it. Lawrence was not shy. [*Laughter*] And I took a class from him, and because he was one of the younger professors, we became really good friends. But also, he was the first openly gay person that I knew who was unapologetic, who stood his ground. If somebody gave him guff, he'd give them guff right back, and was, I think, part of a generation that really fought so many battles that ultimately came into fruition later. And he also played a huge role in advising lesbian, gay, and transgender students at the school at a time when that was still hard for a lot of young college kids. And he went on to become a doctor and ran an AIDS clinic and now is the head of a health center.

But I just wanted to acknowledge him because he helped shape how I think about so many of these issues, and those sort of quiet heroes that sometimes don't get acknowledged. So give Lawrence a big round of applause. So—[*applause*].

Finally, I have to mention a man who's made life at the White House very sweet. This is one of Michelle and my favorite people, our Executive Pastry Chef, Bill Yosses—[*laughter*]—who's here tonight with his husband Charlie. Where's Bill?

The First Lady. But he's leaving.

The President. He's—this is the problem. We call Bill the Crustmaster because his pies—I don't know what he does, whether he puts crack in them, or—[*laughter*]. But——

The First Lady. No, he doesn't. [*Laughter*] There is no crack in our pies. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm just saying that when we first came to the White House—I don't know if you—some of you remember this—the first year, like, my cholesterol shot up. [*Laughter*] And the doctor was like, what happened? You had, like, this really low cholesterol. You were really healthy. And I thought, it's the pie. [*Laughter*] It's the pie. So we had to establish, like, a really firm rule about no pie during the week. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. We had to be disciplined.

The President. But he's also just a wonderful person. And after 7 years, he's leaving the White House. So we just want to give Bill and Charlie the best of luck. And we love them. Thank you.

So a lot has happened in the year since we last gathered here together. Same-sex marriage has gone into effect in 10 more States, which means that 43 percent of Americans now live in States where you're free to marry who you love. The NFL drafted its first openly gay player. Harvey Milk got a stamp. Laverne Cox was on the cover of Time. Coca-Cola and Honeymaid were unafraid to sell their products in commercials showing same-sex parents and their children. And perhaps most importantly, Mitch and Cam got married, which caused Michelle and the girls to cry. [*Laughter*] That was big. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. It was big. [*Laughter*]

The President. This year, we mark the 45th anniversary of Stonewall. And I know some of you were there. And this tremendous progress we've made as a society is thanks to those of you who fought the good fight and to Americans across the country who marched and came out and organized to secure the rights of others. So I want to thank all of you for making the United States a more just and compassionate place.

I want to thank you for offering support and guidance to our administration. Because of your help, we've gone further in protecting the rights of lesbian and gay and bisexual and transgesture Americans than any administration in history.

In 2009, I told you at this reception that I would sign an inclusive hate crimes bill with Matthew Shepard's name on it, and I did. Because hate-driven violence has taken the lives of too many people in this community, and it has to end.

When we came together in 2010, I told you we'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell." Some of you

didn't believe me. [*Laughter*] You know who you are. [*Laughter*] We did that too, because nobody should have to hide who you love to serve the country you love. That same year, we released the first-ever comprehensive national HIV/AIDS strategy to unite our entire Government behind fighting this disease and helping those most at risk.

In 2011, I said my administration would no longer defend the so-called Defense Against Marriage Act. And thanks to Edie Windsor and Robbie Kaplan and the Department of Justice, that law was overturned, and we've extended benefits to legally married same-sex couples across the country.

In 2012, I promised that my administration would do more to address and prevent bullying and discrimination in our classrooms. And we have, because it's not enough just to say it gets better, we have to actually make it better, like so many Americans are trying to do every day.

We've got here today Pete Cahall, who is the principal of Woodrow Wilson High here in Washington. At a school pride events this month, inspired by brave students, Pete stood up and said something he'd never said at the school before, which is, "I am a proud gay man." And the students all cheered. Pete is here today. Because of his example, more young people know they don't have to be afraid to be who they are; no matter who they love, people have their backs. So we're proud of Pete.

Last year, I promised to implement the Affordable Care Act so this community could get quality, affordable health care like you deserve. And we did that too. And thanks to that law, you can no longer be denied health insurance on the basis of your sexual orientation or gender identity.

We've still got a little more work to do. I've repeatedly called on Congress to pass the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act." Right now there are more States that let same-sex couples get married than there are States who prohibit discrimination against their LGBT workers. We have laws that say Americans can't be fired on the basis of the color of their skin or their religion or because they have a disability. But every day, millions of Americans go to work worried that they could lose their job, not because of anything they've done——

[*At this point, a baby cried.*]

The President. I know, it's terrible—[*laughter*]—but because of who they are. [*Laughter*] It's upsetting. It is wrong.

The majority of Fortune 500 companies already have nondiscrimination policies to protect their employees because it's the right thing to do and because many say it helps to retain and attract the best talent. And I agree. So if Congress won't act, I will. I have directed my staff to prepare an Executive order for my signature that prohibits discrimination by Federal contractors on the basis of sexual orientation and identity.

And I've asked my staff to prepare a second Executive order so that Federal employees, who are already protected on the basis of sexual orientation, will now be formally protected from discrimination based on gender identity as well.

So we've got a lot to be proud of, but obviously, we can't grow complacent. We've got to defend the progress that we've made. We've got to keep on reaching out to LGBT Americans who are vulnerable and alone and need our support, whether it's teenagers in rough situations to seniors who are struggling to find housing and care.

[*A baby cried.*]

The President. I know, it's tough. [*Laughter*]

We've got to keep fighting for an AIDS-free generation and for the human rights of LGBT persons around the world.

And we've got to—and I would also ask all of us to direct some of the energy and passion and resources of this movement towards other injustices that exist. Because one of the things that I think we should have learned—[*applause*]—Dr. King said an "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." And that's—and that means that we've got to be able to set up a community that extends beyond our own particular narrow interests; we've got to make

sure that we're reaching out to others who need our help as well.

And that means fighting for poor kids. And it means fighting for workers to get a decent wage. It means showing compassion for the undocumented worker who is contributing to our society and just wants a chance to come out of the shadows. It means fighting for equal pay for equal work. It means standing up for sexual—standing up against sexual violence wherever it occurs. It means trying to eliminate any vestige of racial or religious discrimination and anti-Semitism wherever it happens.

That's how we continue our Nation's march towards justice and equality. That's how we build a more perfect Union, a country where no matter what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is, who you love, you've got a chance to make it if you try. You guys have shown what can happen when people of goodwill organize and stand up for what's right. We've got to make sure that that's not applied just one place, in one circumstance, in one time. That's part of the journey that makes America the greatest country on Earth.

So thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chicago, IL, residents Darby Patrick and Jim Bova; Todd M. Hughes, U.S. Circuit Court Judge for the Federal Circuit; Judith E. Levy, U.S. District Court Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan; Nitza I. Quiñones Alejandro, U.S. District Court Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; Deborah A. Batts, U.S. District Court Judge for the Southern District of New York; Tobias B. Wolff, professor of law, University of Pennsylvania Law School; Lawrence Goldyn, medical director, Mendocino Coast Clinics in Fort Bragg, CA; Charlie J. Fabella, Jr., husband of White House Executive Pastry Chef William Yosses; Michael Sam, defensive end, National Football League's St. Louis Rams; actor Laverne Cox; Edith Windsor, plaintiff in the U.S. Supreme Court case *United States* v. *Windsor*; and Roberta A. Kaplan, partner, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, who argued before the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Ms. Windsor.

Statement on the Deaths of Eyal Yifrach, Gilad Shaar, and Naftali Fraenkel of Israel

June 30, 2014

On behalf of the American people I extend my deepest and heartfelt condolences to the families of Eyal Yifrach, Gilad Shaar, and Naftali Fraenkel—who held Israeli and American citizenship. As a father, I cannot imagine the indescribable pain that the parents of these teenage boys are experiencing. The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms this senseless act of terror against innocent youth. From the outset, I have offered our full support to Israel and the Palestinian Authority to find the perpetrators of this crime and bring them to justice, and I encourage Israel and the Palestinian Authority to continue working together in that effort. I also urge all parties to refrain from steps that could further destabilize the situation. As the Israeli people deal with this tragedy, they have the full support and friendship of the United States.

NOTE: The statement referred to Ori and Iris Yifrach, parents of Eyal Yifrach; Bat Galim Shaar and Ofir Shaar, parents of Gilad Shaar; and Avi and Rachel Fraenkel, parents of Naftali Fraenkel. All three boys were abducted while hitchhiking in the West Bank on June 12. Their bodies were recovered by Israeli authorities on June 30.

Letter to Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi on Efforts To Address the Humanitarian Situation in the Río Grande Valley Areas of the United States-Mexico Border

June 30, 2014

Dear Speaker Boehner, Senator Reid, Senator McConnell, and Representative Pelosi:

I am writing to update you on my Administration's efforts to address the urgent humanitarian situation in the Río Grande Valley areas of our Nation's Southwest border, and to request that the Congress support the new tools and resources we need to implement a unified, comprehensive Federal Government response.

While overall apprehensions across our entire border have only slightly increased during this time period and remain at near historic lows, we have seen a significant rise in apprehensions and processing of children and individuals from Central America who are crossing into the United States in the Río Grande Valley areas of the Southwest border. The individuals who embark upon this perilous journey are subject to violent crime, abuse, and extortion as they rely on dangerous human smuggling networks to transport them through Central America and Mexico.

My Administration continues to address this urgent humanitarian situation with an aggressive, unified, and coordinated Federal response on both sides of the border. Earlier this month, I directed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate this Government-wide response. This includes fulfilling our legal and moral obligation to make sure we appropriately care for unaccompanied children who are apprehended, while taking aggressive steps to surge resources to our Southwest border to deter both adults and children from this dangerous journey, increase capacity for enforcement and removal proceedings, and quickly return unlawful migrants to their home countries.

Specifically, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and DHS are deploying additional enforcement resources—including immigration judges, Immigration and Customs Enforcement attorneys, and asylum officers—to focus on individuals and adults traveling with children from Central America and entering without authorization across the Southwest border. Part of this surge will include detention of adults traveling with children, as well as expanded use of the Alternatives to Detention program, to avoid a more significant humanitarian situation. The DHS is working to secure additional space that satisfies applicable legal and humanitarian standards for detention of adults with children. This surge of resources will mean that cases are processed fairly and as quickly as possible, ensuring the protection of asylum seekers and refugees while enabling the prompt removal of individuals who do not qualify for asylum or other forms of relief from removal. Finally, to attack the criminal organizations and smuggling rings that are exploiting these individuals, we are surging law enforcement task forces in cooperation with our international partners, with a focus on stepped-up interdiction and prosecution.

To address the root causes of migration and stem the flow of adults and unaccompanied children into the United States, we are also working closely with our Mexican and Central American partners. Two weeks ago, at my direction, the Vice President convened leaders from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, as well as Mexico, to discuss our shared responsibility for promoting security, and agree on concrete ways that we can work together to stem the flow of migrants taking the dangerous trip to the United States. These countries committed to working together and with the United States to address the immediate humanitarian crisis as well as the long-term challenges. On Tuesday, Secretary Kerry will meet with the

leaders of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to follow up on the items agreed to in the Vice President's trip, and next week, Secretary Johnson will travel to Guatemala. I also spoke with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto about our shared responsibility to promote security in both our countries and the region. As part of this effort, the United States committed foreign assistance resources to improve capacity of these countries to receive and reintegrate returned individuals and address the underlying security and economic issues that cause migration. This funding will enable El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to improve their existing repatriation processes and increase the capacity of these governments and nongovernmental organizations to provide expanded services to returned migrants. Additional resources will support community policing and law enforcement efforts to combat gang violence and strengthen citizen security in some of the most violent communities in these countries.

Finally, we are working with our Central American partners, nongovernmental organizations, and other influential voices to send a clear message to potential migrants so that they understand the significant dangers of this journey and what they will experience in the United States. These public information campaigns make clear that recently arriving individuals and children will be placed into removal proceedings, and are not eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals process and earned citizenship provisions that are part of comprehensive immigration reform currently under consideration in the Congress. The Vice President made this clear in his public and private events on June 20, I addressed this last week in an interview, and we will continue to use multiple channels to counteract the misinformation that is being spread by smugglers.

While we are working across all of these channels, to execute a fully effective Government-wide strategy as the influx of migrants continues, we are eager to work with the Congress to ensure that we have the legal authorities to maximize the impact of our efforts. Initially, we believe this may include:

- providing the DHS Secretary additional authority to exercise discretion in processing the return and removal of unaccompanied minor children from noncontiguous countries like Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador; and
- increasing penalties for those who smuggle vulnerable migrants, like children.

In addition, we will request congressional action on emergency supplemental appropriations legislation to support:

- an aggressive deterrence strategy focused on the removal and repatriation of recent border crossers;
- a sustained border security surge through enhanced domestic enforcement, including interdiction and prosecution of criminal networks;
- a significant increase in immigration judges, reassigning them to adjudicate cases of recent border crossers, and establishing corresponding facilities to expedite the processing of cases involving those who crossed the border in recent weeks;
- a stepped up effort to work with our Central American partners to repatriate and reintegrate migrants returned to their countries, address the root causes of migration, and communicate the realities of these dangerous journeys; and
- the resources necessary to appropriately detain, process, and care for children and adults.

My Administration will be submitting a formal detailed request when the Congress returns from recess, and I look forward to working with you to address this urgent situation as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: The letter referred to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to Iraq

June 30, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As I previously reported on June 16, 2014, U.S. Armed Forces personnel have deployed to Iraq to provide support and security for U.S. personnel and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

In light of the security situation in Baghdad, I have ordered up to approximately 200 additional U.S. Armed Forces personnel to Iraq to reinforce security at the U.S. Embassy, its support facilities, and the Baghdad International Airport. This force consists of additional security forces, rotary-wing aircraft, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support.

This force is deploying for the purpose of protecting U.S. citizens and property, if necessary, and is equipped for combat. This force will remain in Iraq until the security situation becomes such that it is no longer needed.

This action has been directed consistent with my responsibility to protect U.S. citizens both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148).I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Appendix A—Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this book.

January 2

In the morning, the President traveled from his vacation residence in Kailua, HI, to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, where he played golf with Prime Minister John P. Key of New Zealand, Prime Minister Key's son Max, and White House Trip Director Marvin D. Nicholson, Jr. He and Prime Minister Key also discussed New Zealand-U.S. relations.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Kailua, HI.

January 3

The White House announced that the President will return to Washington, DC, on January 4.

January 4

In the evening, the President and his daughters Malia and Sasha returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

January 6

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with his senior advisers.

The President declared a major disaster in Arkansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe winter storm on December 5 and 6, 2013.

January 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with David Remnick for the New Yorker magazine. Later, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

January 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to wish her a speedy recovery following her recent injury and congratulate her on the formation of a new Cabinet. Later, in the Situation Room, he and Vice President Biden met with the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Then, in the Situation Room, they met with leaders of the intelligence community. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the 2013 National Basketball Association champion Miami Heat to the White House on January 14.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher P. Lu to be Deputy Secretary of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael W. Kempner to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

The President announced his intention to nominate Westley W.O. Moore and Heidi Biggs to be members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert D. Alverson, James W. Balsiger, and Donald R. Lane as U.S. Commissioners of the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

January 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an

intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, they met with Members of Congress to discuss the administration's ongoing review of signals intelligence and electronic surveillance programs.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

The President announced his intention to nominate Deborah L. Birx to be Ambassador at Large and Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities To Combat HIV/AIDS Globally at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Suzette Kimball to be Director of the U.S. Geological Survey at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jerilyn Mendoza as a member of the Joint Public Advisory Committee of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

January 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the Coupe restaurant, the President had lunch with Anne Johnson, Andres Cruz, Jasmine Hicks, Tommy McFly, and David Dimock to discuss health insurance reforms and thank them for their efforts to raise awareness about the importance of young people enrolling for health insurance coverage in the new marketplaces. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Head Coach John "Jimbo" Fisher of the Florida State University football team to congratulate him on his team's victory in the BCS Championship.

The President announced his intention to nominate Stanley Fischer to be Vice Chairman and a Governor on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lael Brainard and Jerome H. Powell to be Governors on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

The President declared an emergency in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts resulting from a chemical spill beginning on January 9 and continuing.

January 12

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the state funeral of former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel in Jerusalem on January 13:

Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (head of delegation);
Daniel Shapiro;
Eliot L. Engel;
Deborah Wasserman Schultz; and
Daniel Kurtzer.

January 13

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico to discuss Mexico-U.S. trade, reform efforts in Mexico, and the upcoming North American Leaders' Summit in Toluca, Mexico.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Raleigh, NC, on January 15.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Toluca, Mexico, on February 19 to participate in the North American Leaders' Summit.

January 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with the Executive Committee of the National Governors Association to discuss efforts to strengthen the national economy, improve education, and reduce unemployment. Then, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Maria Shriver to discuss the most recent Shriver Report, "A Woman's Nation Pushes Back From the Brink."

January 15

In the morning, the President traveled to Raleigh, NC. Then, he traveled to Durham, NC, where at a Vacon Inc. facility, he toured research and development operations with Vacon's Vice President of Research and Development Dan Isaksson and Secretary of Energy Ernest J. Moniz.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Raleigh, NC. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

Later in the afternoon, in the East Room, the President met with the Senate Democratic Caucus.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado as President of Honduras in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on January 27:

Thomas E. Perez (head of delegation);
Lisa Kubiske;
Roberta S. Jacobson; and
Ricardo Zuniga.

January 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the situation in Syria, reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the peace process in Northern Ireland, and the ongoing review of U.S. signals intelligence and electronic surveillance programs.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nina Hachigian to be U.S. Representative to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Shamina Singh and Richard Christman to be members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Matthew H. Tueller to be Ambassador to Yemen.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gustavo Velasquez to be Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced the nomination of Stephen R. Bough to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri.

The President announced the nomination of Richard F. Boulware II to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada.

The President announced the nomination of Salvador Mendoza, Jr., to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington.

The President announced the nomination of Staci M. Yandle to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans:

Angela Glover Blackwell;
Barbara T. Bowman;
Gwendolyn E. Boyd;
Walter G. Bumphus;
James P. Comer;
Al Dotson, Jr.;
Akosua Barthwell Evans;
Jim Freeman;
Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks;
Michael L. Lomax;
Bryant T. Marks;
Robert K. Ross;
Doris A. Smith-Ribner;
Ronald A. Williams; and
TyKiah R. Wright.

The President declared a major disaster in Alaska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by flooding on October 27 and 28, 2013.

January 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval

Office, he met with Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes to prepare for his remarks on U.S. signals intelligence and electronic surveillance programs.

In the afternoon, following his remarks at the Department of Justice, the President dropped by the overflow room and thanked Department of Justice staff for their service. Later, in the Map Room, he recorded an interview with Claus Kleber of ZDF public television of Germany for later broadcast.

January 20

In the afternoon, at DC Central Kitchen, the President, Mrs. Obama, their daughters Malia and Sasha, and White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett participated in a service project to promote voluntarism in celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.

January 21

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in Syria, the Joint Plan of Action to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons, security preparations for the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, and Russia-U.S. relations. Then, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

The White House announced that the President will travel to the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, and Vatican City from March 24 through 27.

The White House announced that the United States will host the first U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington, DC, on August 5 and 6.

January 22

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, they met with Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel, Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and other senior administration officials to discuss Federal efforts to combat sexual assualt and review the findings of a White House Council on Women and Girls report on sexual assault.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, the President dropped by a meeting between Vice President Biden and Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Iraq Usama al-Nujayfi. Then, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Director of Speechwriting Cody S. Keenan to prepare for his State of the Union Address.

January 23

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President met with Director of Speechwriting Cody S. Keenan and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes to prepare for his State of the Union Address.

The President declared a major disaster in Alaska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, straight-line winds, and flooding from November 5 through 14, 2013.

January 24

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President recorded a video message on the observance of the Lunar New Year for broadcast on January 31.

In the evening, in the Oval Office, the President met with Director of Speechwriting Cody S. Keenan to prepare for his State of the Union Address.

During the day, the President met with Director of Speechwriting Cody S. Keenan and Senior Adviser H. Daniel Pfeiffer to prepare for his State of the Union Address.

The President announced the appointment of David M. Simas as Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Political Strategy and Outreach.

The President announced the appointment of Broderick Johnson as Assistant to the President and Cabinet Secretary.

The President announced the appointment of Amy J. Brundage as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Communications Director.

The President announced the appointment of Anne E. Wall as Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs and Senate Liaison.

The President announced the appointment of Amy Rosenbaum as Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs.

January 27

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi of Yemen to discuss democracy efforts in Yemen, counterterrorism and security cooperation, and Yemen-U.S. relations.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Lanham, MD, and West Mifflin, PA, on January 29.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Waukesha, WI, and Nashville, TN, on January 30.

January 28

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

January 29

In the morning, the President traveled to Glenarden, MD, where he toured the Costco Wholesale Corp. Woodmore Towne Centre Warehouse and met with employees. Later, he traveled to West Mifflin, PA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, in West Mifflin, PA, the President toured the U.S. Steel Corp. Mon Valley Works Irvin Plant with U.S. Steel President and Chief Executive Officer Mario Longhi, Vice President of Engineering and Research and Development Anthony R. Bridge, Irvin Plant Manager Amy Smith-Yoder, United Steelworkers (USW) International President Leo W. Gerard, and USW Local 2227 President Kevin McKelvey.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Then, in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., of California to discuss the drought affecting California and Federal Government response efforts.

The White House announced that the President will meet with King Abdullah II of Jordan at Sunnylands Estate in Rancho Mirage, CA, on February 14.

The President declared a major disaster in Vermont and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe winter storms from December 20 through 26, 2013.

January 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Waukesha, WI, where he toured the General Electric Co. Gas Engines Plant with Lorraine Bolsinger, president and chief executive officer, and Jim Flemming, plant manager and global supply chain manager, General Electric Power and Water's Distributed Power. Later, also at the General Electric plant, he recorded a television interview with Jake Tapper of CNN's "The Lead" program.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Nashville, TN, where, at McGavock High School, he met with the family of Kevin Barbee, a student who was killed in a shooting on January 29. He also met with former Vice President Albert A. Gore, Jr., and actor Ashley T. Judd. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The President announced his intention to nominate Miranda A.A. Ballentine to be

Assistant Secretary for Installations, Environment, and Logistics at the Department of the Air Force.

The President announced his intention to nominate Norman C. Bay to be a Commissioner of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and, upon appointment, designate him as Chairman.

The President announced his intention to nominate L. Reginald Brothers, Jr., to be Under Secretary for Science and Technology at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate William P. Doyle to be a Commissioner of the Federal Maritime Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ann E. Dunkin to be Assistant Administrator for Environmental Information at the Environmental Protection Agency.

The President announced his intention to nominate Manuel H. Ehrlich, Jr., to be a member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mileydi Guilarte to be U.S. Alternate Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The President announced his intention to nominate Suzan G. LeVine to be Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. McCord to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

The President announced his intention to nominate Brian P. McKeon to be Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christine E. Wormuth to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

The President announced his intention to appoint Theodore B. Olson as a member of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nathalie Rayes as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The President declared a major disaster in Oklahoma and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe winter storm on December 5 and 6, 2013.

January 31

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the State Dining Room, they met with chief executive officers and other leaders to discuss best practices for hiring the long-term unemployed.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President participated in a Google+ Hangouts virtual road trip across the country to discuss his State of the Union Address.

February 2

In the afternoon, in the Blue Room, the President participated in a live television interview with Bill O'Reilly of Fox News for the Fox Super Bowl XLVIII pregame show.

February 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa of Tunisia to congratulate him and the Tunisian people on the ratification of a new constitution and formation of an interim government and discuss Tunisia-U.S. relations.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with 2013 Enrico Fermi Award recipients Allen J. Bard and Andrew Sessler. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Adelphi, MD, on February 4.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Saudi Arabia in March.

February 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Then, in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Head Coach Peter C. Carroll of the National Football

League's Seattle Seahawks to congratulate him on his team's victory in Super Bowl XLVIII. Later, also in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Department of Defense leadership to discuss U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

Later in the afternoon, in the East Room, the President and Vice President Biden participated in a roundtable discussion with members of the House Democratic Caucus to discuss the national economy and job creation.

In the evening, in the Grand Foyer, the President hosted a reception for members of the House Democratic Caucus.

During the day, in the Situation Room, the President and Vice President received an update on U.S. cooperation with Russia to ensure the security and safety of U.S. athletes, delegates, and other citizens attending the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia.

The White House announced that the President will travel to East Lansing, MI, on February 7.

The White House announced that President Obama and President François Hollande of France will travel to Charlottesville, VA, on February 10, where they will tour Monticello, the residence of former President Thomas Jefferson.

February 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers.

In the afternoon, at Nationals Park, the President met with Senators attending the Senate Democratic Issues Conference. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew. Then, also in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the opening ceremony of the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, on February 7:

Janet A. Napolitano (head of delegation);
Michael A. McFaul;
Robert L. Nabors II;
Brian A. Boitano; and
Caitlin Cahow.

The President announced his intention to nominate Beth Bloom and Darrin P. Gayles to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

The President announced his intention to nominate Paul G. Byron and Carlos E. Mendoza to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cheryl A. Krause to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

February 6

In the afternoon, in the Library, the President recorded an interview with Bob Costas of NBC Sports for later broadcast.

The President declared an emergency in Pennsylvania and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local response efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm beginning on February 4 and continuing.

February 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to East Lansing, MI.

In the afternoon, on the campus of Michigan State University, the President and Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack toured the Michigan Biotechnology Institute and visited with employees. Then, he had lunch with Mayor Michael E. Duggan of Detroit. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President recorded an interview with Madd Hatta of KBXX's "Madd Hatta Morning Show" in Houston, TX.

The White House released further details on President Obama's travel with President François Hollande of France to Charlottesville, VA, on February 10.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a

Presidential delegation to attend the 2014 Paralympic Games in Sochi, Russia, on March 7:

L. Tammy Duckworth (head of delegation);
Kathy Martinez;
Celeste A. Wallander;
Anthony Robles;
Sandra Kukat; and
Brian Mosteller.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark Green to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert O. Work to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cassandra Q. Butts to be Ambassador to the Bahamas.

The President announced his intention to nominate Matthew T. McGuire to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

February 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, he traveled to Joint Base Andrews, MD, where he welcomed President François Hollande of France upon his arrival. Then, he and President Hollande traveled to Charlottesville, VA, where they toured Monticello, the residence of former President Thomas Jefferson.

In the evening, President Obama and President Hollande returned to Washington, DC.

February 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President met with President François Hollande of France. Then, in the Cabinet Room, he and Vice President Joe Biden had an expanded bilateral meeting with President Hollande.

Also in the morning, the President was briefed on the severe winter weather pattern affecting the southern States.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers.

In the evening, on the North Portico, the President and Mrs. Obama greeted President Hollande of France upon his arrival for a state dinner and reception. Then, on the Grand Staircase, he and Mrs. Obama participated in a photo opportunity with President Hollande.

The President declared an emergency in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from a severe winter storm beginning on February 10 and continuing.

The White House announced that the President will host a "My Brother's Keeper" initiative event on February 13.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Fresno, CA, on February 14.

February 12

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing, which included an update on the severe winter weather pattern affecting the southern States.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Rancho Mirage, CA, on February 14 to meet with King Abdullah II of Jordan at the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and the Philippines in late April.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to the White House on March 3.

The President announced his intention to nominate Todd A. Batta to be Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations at the Department of Agriculture.

The President announced his intention to nominate Maria Cancian to be Assistant Secretary for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Julia A. Clark to be General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The President announced his intention to nominate Victoria Reggie Kennedy to be a Governor on the Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate D. Nathan Sheets to be Under Secretary for International Affairs at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark Sobel to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund.

The President announced his intention to nominate Francis X. Taylor to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate Juan Carlos Iturregui, Roberta S. Jacobson, and Annette Taddeo-Goldstein to be members of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate R. Jane Chu to be Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The President declared an emergency in South Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from a severe winter storm beginning on February 10 and continuing.

February 13

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Library, the President recorded an interview with sports announcer and former National Basketball Association player Charles Barkley of TNT's "Inside the NBA" program for later broadcast. Later, he gave Mr. Barkley a personal tour of the Oval Office.

February 14

In the morning, the President traveled to Cambridge, MD.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Fresno, CA. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Enrico Letta of Italy to express his gratitude for the Prime Minister's leadership and discuss Italy-U.S. relations. Upon arrival in Fresno, he traveled to Firebaugh, CA. While en route aboard Marine One, he viewed drought damage in the central valley of California with Rep. Jim Costa and Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

In the evening, the President traveled to Rancho Mirage, CA, where, at the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands, he welcomed King Abdullah II of Jordan. Later, he and King Abdullah had a working dinner.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the closing ceremony of the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, on February 23:

William J. Burns (head of delegation);
Michael A. McFaul;
Billie Jean King;
Bonnie Blair; and
Eric Heiden.

The President announced his intention to nominate Todd Sunhwae Kim to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

February 15

The White House announced that the President will return to Washington, DC, on February 17.

February 16

The White House announced that the President will travel to Upper Marlboro, MD, on February 18.

February 17

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

February 18

In the morning, the President traveled to Upper Marlboro, MD.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Oval Office, he

met with Japanese American veterans of World War II to congratulate them on their Congressional Gold Medal and thank them for their service. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with African American civil rights leaders to discuss criminal justice reform, income inequality, and the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel. Later, in the Family Theater, he hosted a screening of the film "The Monuments Men" for castmembers, crew, and officials from the Cultural Heritage Center.

February 19

In the morning, the President traveled to Toluca, Mexico, arriving in the afternoon.

Upon arrival at the International Airport of Toluca, the President signed Executive Order 13659 to streamline the export-import process for U.S. small businesses. Then, also at the International Airport of Toluca, he participated in an official arrival ceremony. Later, he traveled to the Palacio de Gobierno of the State of Mexico, where he was greeted by President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico. Then, in the Governor's office, he had a meeting with President Peña Nieto.

Later in the afternoon, at the Cosmovitral, the President participated in a photo opportunity with Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada and President Peña Nieto of Mexico, followed by a working lunch. Then, also at the Cosmovitral, he walked in the botanical gardens with Prime Minister Harper and President Peña Nieto. Then, he met with Prime Minister Harper. Later, he traveled to the Palacio de Justicia of the State of Mexico, where he participated in a trilateral meeting of the North American Leaders' Summit. Then, he walked to the Palacio de Gobierno.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to discuss the situation in Syria, other regional issues, and Turkey-U.S. relations.

February 20

In the morning, the President sent a tweet to Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada placing a bet on the success of the U.S. men's and women's hockey teams at the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in Ukraine.

February 21

In the morning, in the Map Room, the President met with Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch. Then, he had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in Ukraine and other global issues.

The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor to 24 Army veterans in recognition of their valor during combat in World War II, the Korean war, and the Vietnam war on March 18.

February 23

The White House announced that the President will travel to Saint Paul, MN, on February 26.

February 24

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy to congratulate him on his election victory. They also discussed Italy-U.S. cooperation in Afghanistan and Libya and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations.

In the afternoon, in the Situation Room, the President met with Gov. Janice K. Brewer of Arizona, Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, Gov. Gary R. Herbert of Utah, Gov. John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado, Gov. John A. Kitzhaber of Oregon, Gov. Jay R. Inslee of Washington,

Gov. Matthew H. Mead of Wyoming, Gov. Brian E. Sandoval of Nevada, and administration officials to discuss the increasing frequency and severity of droughts, wildfires, and other extreme weather events; the Federal Government's natural disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts; proposed changes to wildfire suppression funding in the President's upcoming budget; and the effects of climate change.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had a teleconference call with State and local officials from around the country to discuss efforts to improve enrollment in health insurance exchanges under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Later, in the Diplomatic Reception Room, he recorded an interview with Zach Galifianakis of the Funny or Die website's "Between Two Ferns" program for later broadcast.

The White House announced that the President will host an event to announce new manufacturing innovation institutes on February 25.

The White House announced that the President will host an event to launch the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative on February 27.

February 25

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan to discuss preparations for Afghanistan's upcoming elections, reconciliation efforts, and the Afghanistan-U.S. bilateral security agreement. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner.

The White House announced that the President will host a student film festival to promote the expansion of Internet access and educational technology in schools.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend Nigeria's Centenary Celebration in Abuja, Nigeria, on February 27 and 28: Thomas A. Shannon, Jr. (head of delegation); and James F. Entwistle.

February 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Saint Paul, MN, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, in Saint Paul, MN, the President and Secretary of Transportation Anthony R. Foxx toured the Metro Transit Light Rail Operations and Maintenance Facility and met with employees. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert W. Holleyman II to be Deputy U.S. Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lisa S. Disbrow to be Assistant Secretary for Financial Management at the Department of the Air Force.

The President announced his intention to nominate Laura Junor to be Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Karen Kornbluh to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

The President announced his intention to appoint Leslie Meyers as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Janet Hill and Michael Lombardo as members of the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rose K. Schlossberg and Susan S. Sher as general trustees of the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint John W. Rogers, Jr., as Chair of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans.

The President announced his intention to appoint José Cisneros as Vice Chair of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members

of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans:

Theodore J. Beck;
Sherry S. Black;
John H. Bryant;
Anna Maria Chávez;
Kerry N. Doi;
Ted Gonder;
Richard G. Ketchum;
Beth Kobliner;
Kilandigalu M. "Kay" Madati;
Marc H. Morial;
Carol E. Quillen;
Amy Rosen; and
Charles W. Scharf.

The President announced the nomination of Robin L. Rosenberg to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joseph J. Echevarria, Jr., as a member of the President's Export Council.

February 27

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the State Dining Room, the President met with foundation and business leaders, elected officials, and administration officials to discuss the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority to the White House on March 17.

February 28

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the Capitol Hilton hotel, the President attended a Democratic National Committee fundraiser.

March 1

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in Ukraine and express his concern over Russia's intervention in Ukraine. He also had separate telephone conversations with President François Hollande of France and Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada to discuss the situation in Ukraine and pledge continued U.S. support for democratic reforms and economic stabilization in Ukraine.

March 2

In the afternoon, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland, and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss Russia's intervention in Ukraine and affirm continued U.S. support for security cooperation and democracy efforts in Eastern Europe.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New Britain, CT, on March 5.

March 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, he had a telephone conversation with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces, to discuss U.A.E.-U.S. relations. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he dropped by a meeting between Vice President Biden and Prime Minister Iurie Leanca of Moldova.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Boston, MA, on March 5.

March 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at Powell Elementary School, he toured classrooms and visited with teachers and students.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

In the evening, the President traveled to McLean, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in Ukraine.

March 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, he traveled to New Britain, CT, arriving in the afternoon. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss Russia's intervention in Ukraine and continued U.K.-U.S. support of the interim Ukrainian Government.

In the afternoon, while en route to Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, CT, the President stopped for lunch and greeted patrons at Café Beauregard, where he was joined by Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut, Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts, Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee of Rhode Island, and Gov. Peter E. Shumlin of Vermont. Later, he traveled to Boston, MA.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will travel to Miami, FL, on March 7.

March 6

In the morning, at the Newseum, the President participated in a town hall meeting on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's benefits for Latinos.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss Russia's intervention in Ukraine and efforts to resolve the situation diplomatically.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan to discuss the situation in Ukraine and Japan-U.S. relations.

During the day, the President met with his national security team. Later, he stopped by a meeting with YouTube users to discuss strategies for raising awareness about the importance of health insurance enrollment.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nani A. Coloretti to be Deputy Secretary at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Estevan R. Lopez to be Commissioner of Reclamation at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate Erika L. Moritsugu to be Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Monica C. Regalbuto to be Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Andrew H. Schapiro to be Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

The President announced his intention to appoint Thomas R. Lamont as a member of the American Battle Monuments Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Alan B. Lazowski as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Latifa A. Lyles as Director of the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to appoint Susan Athey, John T. Cacioppo, and Sharon R. Long as members of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science.

The President declared a major disaster in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm from February 10 through 14.

March 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the

State Dining Room, he welcomed 2014 Intel Science Talent Search finalists and participated in a group photograph.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Miami, FL. Later, they traveled to Key Largo, FL.

Also in the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in Ukraine.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the 2012–2013 NCAA champion student athletes to the White House on March 10.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Michelle Bachelet Jeria as President of Chile in Santiago, Chile, on March 11: Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (head of delegation); Michael A. Hammer; and Roberta S. Jacobson.

March 8

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, President François Hollande of France, and Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy to discuss the situation in Ukraine. He also participated in a conference call with President Andris Berzins of Latvia, President Dalia Grybauskaite of Lithuania, and President Toomas Hendrik Ilves of Estonia to discuss the situation in Ukraine and reaffirm U.S. support for democracy in the Baltic States. They also discussed regional security issues and cooperation within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The White House announced that the President, Mrs. Obama, and their Malia and Sasha will return to Washington, DC, on March 9.

March 9

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping of China to discuss the situation in Ukraine and China-U.S. relations.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk of Ukraine to the White House on March 12.

March 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he participated in a credentialing ceremony for newly appointed Ambassadors to the U.S.: Mhamed Ezzine Chelaifa of Tunisia, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar of India, Jalil Abbas Jilani of Pakistan, Rupa Abraham Mulina of Papua New Guinea, Johan Cecilia Verbeke of Belgium, and Mohammed Jaham A.A. Al Kuwari of Qatar.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy Brey of Spain and President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan to discuss the situation in Ukraine.

Also in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a conference call with faith and community leaders across the country to discuss efforts to promote enrollment in health insurance exchanges under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

March 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New York City, where, at the East 42d and Third Avenue Gap Inc. store, he purchased gifts for his family. Then, at a private residence, he attended a Democratic National Committee fundraiser.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor to 24 Army veterans in recognition of their valor during combat in World War II, the Korean war, and the Vietnam war on March 18.

The President announced his intention to appoint Andrew Jackson as Assistant Secretary for Management at the Department of Education.

The President announced the nomination of Leslie J. Abrams to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia.

The President announced the appointment of Robert J. Glovsky and Deanna M. Mulligan as members of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans.

March 12

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President met with advocates working to raise public awareness of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Later, in the Diplomatic Reception Room, he participated in an interview with Lisa Zamosky of WebMD Health Corp.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Enda Kenny of Ireland to the White House on March 14.

The President declared a major disaster in South Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe winter storm from February 10 through 14.

March 13

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) Chairman Ruben Hinojosa, CHC Immigration Task Force Chair Luis Gutierrez, and House Democratic Caucus Chairman Xavier Becerra to discuss immigration reform.

Also during the day, in the East Room, the President met with student delegates from the 52d Annual U.S. Senate Youth Program.

The President announced his intention to nominate Judith M. Davenport to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The President announced his intention to nominate Brad R. Huther to be Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to appoint Peter C. Groff as a member of the Commission on Presidential Scholars.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joyce A. Mader as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Horacio Rodiles as a member of the U.S. section of the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint John E. Huerta, Barry W. Karas, and Ronnie Planalp as members of the Advisory Committee on the Arts for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced the nomination of John W. deGravelles to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana.

The President announced the nomination of Deirdre M. Daly to be U.S. attorney for the District of Connecticut.

The President announced the nomination of James W.F. Green to be U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana.

The President announced the nomination of Ronald L. Miller to be U.S. marshal for the District of Kansas.

March 14

In the afternoon, in the Rayburn Room at the U.S. Capitol, the President, Vice President Joe Biden, and Prime Minister Enda Kenny of Ireland attended a Congressional Friends of Ireland luncheon. Later, in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, he, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson, and senior advisers met with organizations advocating for immigration reform.

March 16

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss Russia's intervention in Ukraine and efforts to resolve the situation diplomatically.

March 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President had a working lunch with President Abbas. Later, he traveled to Bethesda, MD, where, at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, he met with wounded U.S. military personnel and their families and presented a Purple Heart to a servicemember. Then, he returned to Washington, DC.

March 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss Russia's intervention in Ukraine and efforts to resolve the situation diplomatically. Then, in the Map Room, he recorded separate interviews with ESPN's Andy Katz and Rebecca R. Lobo-Rushin for later broadcast.

In the afternoon, in the Gallatin Room of the Jefferson hotel, the President attended a Democratic National Committee event.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Orlando and Miami, FL, on March 20.

March 19

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Diplomatic Room, the President recorded separate interviews with Alison King of NECN in Newton, MA; Mike Bush of KSDK in St. Louis, MO; Julie Nelson of KARE in Minneapolis, MN; Clarice Tinsley of KDFW in Dallas, TX; Mark Mullen of NBC 7 in San Diego, CA; and Catherine Anaya of KPHO in Phoenix, AZ.

In the evening, in the Blue Room, the President participated in a satellite interview with Ellen L. DeGeneres of NBC's "Ellen" program.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry and National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa of Tunisia to the White House on April 4.

March 20

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President met with National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, Deputy National Security Adviser Antony J. Blinken, White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough, Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, National Economic Council Director Jeffrey D. Zients, and Secretary of the Treasury, Jacob J. Lew to discuss sanctions against Russia. Then, he traveled to Orlando, FL, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Valencia College, West Campus, where, in classroom 8–120, he participated in a roundtable discussion with college students and local workers. Later, he traveled to Miami, FL, where he attended a Democratic National Committee fundraiser at a private residence.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joshua M. Javits as Chair of Presidential Emergency Board No. 245.

The President announced his intention to appoint Elizabeth C. Wesman and M. David Vaughn as members of Presidential Emergency Board No. 245.

The President announced his intention to appoint Patrick D. Cannon, Howard A. Rosenblum, and Deborah A. Ryan as members of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Access Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Gary Blumenthal, Ari Néeman, and Clyde E. Terry as members of the National Council on Disability.

March 21

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with information technology company chief executive officers W. Reed Hastings, Jr., of Netflix, Andrew W. Houston of Dropbox, Alexander C. Karp of Palantir, Aaron W. Levie of Box, Eric E. Schmidt of Google, and Mark E. Zuckerberg

of Facebook to discuss intelligence, technology, and privacy issues.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Tamam Salam of Lebanon to congratulate him on the formation of his Cabinet, the situation in Syria, and Lebanon-U.S. relations.

March 23

In the evening, the President traveled to Amsterdam, Netherlands, arriving the following morning.

March 24

In the morning, in Amsterdam, Netherlands, the President visited the Rijksmuseum, where he signed the guest book and toured the museum with Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands, Mayor Eberhard van der Laan of Amsterdam, and Rijksmuseum General Director Wim Pijbes. Later, he traveled to The Hague, Netherlands.

In the afternoon, at the World Forum in The Hague, the President attended the opening session of the Nuclear Security Summit. Later, also at the World Forum, he participated in the first plenary discussion of the Nuclear Security Summit, followed by a scenario-based policy discussion.

In the evening, at Catshuis, the official residence of the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, the President attended a Group of Seven (G–7) leaders meeting on the situation in Ukraine. Later, he traveled to Amsterdam, Netherlands, where, at the Royal Palace, he participated in a reception and photo opportunity with the attending leaders of the Nuclear Security Summit and King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands. Then, also at the Royal Palace, he had a working dinner with King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands.

Later in the evening, the President traveled to the Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin in Noordsijk, Netherlands, where he remained overnight.

The President announced the appointment of Douglas M. Brooks as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy.

The President declared an emergency in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from flooding and mudslides beginning on March 22 and continuing.

March 25

In the morning, the President traveled to The Hague, Netherlands, where, at the U.S. Ambassador's residence, he met with President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan. Later, at the World Forum, he attended the leaders-only plenary session of the Nuclear Security Summit.

In the afternoon, at the World Forum, the President participated in the official Nuclear Security Summit leaders family photograph. Then, also at the World Forum, he attended a working lunch with plenary discussion, followed by the third plenary discussion. Later, at the U.S. Ambassador's residence, he met with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces.

During the day, at the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, the President was briefed by White House Deputy Chief of Staff Alyssa Mastromonaco on the mudslide in Oso, WA. Also during the day, at the U.S. Ambassador's residence, he had a pull-aside meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan

In the evening, at the U.S. Ambassador's residence, the President met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families. Later, he traveled to Brussels, Belgium. Upon arrival, he traveled to The Hotel, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the 2013 World Series Champion Boston Red Sox to the White House on April 1.

March 26

In the morning, the President traveled to Waregem, Belgium, where, at Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial, he participated in a wreath-laying ceremony and toured the grounds.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Brussels, Belgium, where, at the Council of the European Union, he was greeted by European Commission President José Manuel Durão

Barroso and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy. Then, also at the Council of the European Union, he attended a working lunch at the European Union-U.S. Summit. Later, at The Hotel, he met with personnel and families of the U.S. Tri-Mission to Belgium, the European Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In the evening, the President traveled to Rome, Italy. Upon arrival, he traveled to the U.S. Ambassador's residence, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will welcome members of the 2014 U.S. Olympic and Paralympic teams to the White House on April 3.

March 27

In the morning, the President traveled to the Vatican, where he had an audience and exchanged gifts with Pope Francis. Later, he met with Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin of the Holy See (Vatican City).

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Rome, Italy, where, at the Quirinal Palace, he participated in a restricted bilateral meeting with President Giorgio Napolitano of Italy, followed by an expanded bilateral meeting and a working lunch. Later, at the Villa Madama, he met with Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy. Also at the Villa Madama, he received a telephone briefing from Senior Communications Adviser Tara D. McGuinness on the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Later in the afternoon, the President toured the Colosseum with Colosseum Technical Director and Architect Barbara Nazzaro.

In the evening, at the U.S. Ambassador to Italy's residence in Rome, the President met with personnel and families of the U.S. Tri-Mission to Italy, the Holy See, and the U.N. Agencies in Rome. Later, also at the U.S. Ambassador's residence, he had dinner with U.S. Ambassador to Italy John R. Philips and his wife Linda Douglass, architect Renzo Piano, physicist Fabiola Gianotti, Fiat chairman John Elkann and his sister Ginevra, and A.S. Roma chief executive Italo Zanzi.

Later in the evening, also at the U.S. Ambassador's residence, the President participated in a conference call with health care navigators and volunteers to discuss enrollment in health insurance exchanges under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dean A. Reuter to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Elizabeth Sembler to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The President announced his intention to nominate Elliot F. Kaye to be Commissioner and Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alfonso E. Lenhardt to be Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda Struyk Millsaps to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint David S. Blitzstein as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Michael L. Corbat as a member of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans.

The President announced his intention to appoint Susan Forster-Cox as a member of the U.S. Section of the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission.

March 28

In the morning, at the U.S. Embassy in Rome, Italy, the President recorded a television interview with Scott Pelley of CBS's "Evening News" program for later broadcast. Later, he traveled to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. While en route aboard Air Force One, he met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and

the Gulf Region Philip H. Gordon, and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes.

In the afternoon, upon arrival in Riyadh, the President traveled to Rawdat Khuraim, Saudi Arabia.

In the evening, at the royal compound in Rawdat Khuraim, the President met with King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. Secretary of State John F. Kerry, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Joseph W. Westphal, and White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf Region Philip H. Gordon also attended. Later, he traveled to the Ritz-Carlton, Riyadh hotel in Riyadh, where he remained overnight.

Also in the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the U.S. proposal for a diplomatic resolution to the situation in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Government's constitutional and democratic reform efforts, the Russian military buildup along the Ukraine-Russia border, and U.S. opposition to previous Russian actions concerning the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the state funeral of former President Adolfo Suarez Gonzalez of Spain in Madrid, Spain, on March 31: Raymond E. Mabus, Jr. (head of delegation); D. Robert Graham; and James Costos.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the 20th commemoration of the Rwandan genocide in Kigali, Rwanda, on April 7:

Samantha Power (head of delegation);
Donald W. Koran;
Karen R. Bass;
Linda Thomas-Greenfield;
Stephen J. Rapp;
Russell L. Feingold;
Michael J. Gerson; and
Christine Hjelt.

March 29

In the morning, at the Ritz-Carlton, Riyadh hotel, the President met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families. Later, he traveled to Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President visited with wounded U.S. servicemembers. Then, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

March 31

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a meeting with his senior advisers.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Ann Arbor, MI, on April 2.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Chicago, IL, on April 2.

The President declared a major disaster in North Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe winter storm on March 6 and 7.

April 1

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President had lunch with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Commerce Penny S. Pritzker.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President received an update on the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act from health care policy consultant Philip M. Schiliro, Senior Communications Adviser Tara D. McGuinness, Principal Deputy Director of Public Engagement Marlon Marshall, Deputy Assistant to the President for Health Policy Jeanne M. Lambrew, Adviser to the White House Chief of Staff Kristie A. Canegallo, and White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett.

April 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an

intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Ann Arbor, MI, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at Zingerman's Delicatessen in Ann Arbor, MI, the President had lunch with Rep. Gary C. Peters and participated in a roundtable discussion with University of Michigan student Mira Friedlander, waitress Aisha Thurman of Detroit, MI, and tipped server Graham Kovich of Warren, MI, on efforts to raise the Federal minimum wage.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Chicago, IL, where, at Chicago Cut Steakhouse, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser. Later, also at the Chicago Cut Steakhouse, he participated in a photo opportunity with members of the Chicago Fire and Police Departments. Then, also at the Chicago Cut Steakhouse, he had dinner with Mayor Rahm I. Emanuel of Chicago, and former White House Senior Adviser David M. Axelrod.

Also at the Chicago Cut Steakhouse, he was updated on the shooting at Fort Hood, TX, by Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. James A. "Sandy" Winnefeld, Jr., USN.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a teleconference briefing with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, USA, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, Federal Bureau of Investigation Deputy Director Mark F. Giuliano, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, and Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Robert L Nabors II to discuss the shooting at Fort Hood, TX, and ongoing investigation efforts.

The President declared a major disaster in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by flooding and mudslides beginning on March 22 and continuing.

April 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch.

In the evening, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell, Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi to discuss the President's recent trip to Europe and the situation in Ukraine.

The President announced his intention to nominate Steven Cohen to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas P. Kelly III to be Ambassador to Djibouti.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jane Nishida to be Assistant Administrator for International and Tribal Affairs at the Environmental Protection Agency.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sunil Sabharwal to be U.S. Alternate Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gordon O. Tanner to be General Counsel at the Department of the Air Force.

The President announced his intention to appoint Karen L. Braitmayer as a member of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Access Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the National Council on Disability:

Janice Lehrer-Stein;
Benro T. Ogunyipe;
Katherine D. Seelman; and
Royal P. Walker, Jr.

The President announced the nomination of André Birotte, Jr., to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

The President announced the nomination of Randolph D. Moss to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

April 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

In the afternoon, the President and Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa of Tunisia met with 10 Tunisian undergraduates studying in the United States as part of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program. Later, in the East Room, he hosted a reception for Greek Independence Day. Vice President Biden also attended.

The President declared a major disaster in Oregon and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe winter storm from February 6 through 10.

April 5

The White House announced that the President will travel to Bladensburg, MD, on April 7.

April 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Bladensburg, MD, where, at Bladensburg High School, he toured a science classroom and visited with teachers and students.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with William A. Thien, commander-in-chief, and Robert E. Wallace, executive director, of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Later in the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with the inaugural members of the Presidential Ambassadors for Global Entrepreneurship (PAGE) and PAGE Chair, Secretary of Commerce Penny S. Pritzker.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will travel to Houston, TX, on April 9.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will travel to Fort Hood, TX, on April 9.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will travel to Austin, TX, on April 10.

April 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

April 9

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Killeen, TX, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, upon arrival at Robert Gray Army Airfield, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Fort Hood, TX. Later, they traveled to Houston, TX. Upon arrival at George H.W. Bush Intercontinental Airport, they were greeted by former President George H.W. Bush. Then, the President traveled to a private residence, where he attended a Democratic National Committee fundraiser.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Crowne Plaza Houston-Downtown hotel, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President was updated on the stabbing at Franklin Regional Senior High School in Murrysville, PA.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will travel to New York City on April 11.

April 10

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Austin, TX, where, at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, they, Rep. John R. Lewis, and LBJ Presidential Library Director Mark K. Updegrove viewed an exhibit commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and former President Johnson's role in the civil rights movement. Later, also at the LBJ Presidential Library, he met with Texas State Sen. Wendy Davis.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in Ukraine, international concern over Russian

troops on the Ukraine-Russia border, and diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis. He also had a telephone conversation with Principal Ron Suvak of Franklin Regional Senior High School in Murrysville, PA, to express his concern for the students and families affected by the April 9 stabbings, thank him for his leadership, and offer Federal assistance to the school community.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Beaumont, TX, resident Elbek Elibaev and his niece Sabina Johnson, who visited the White House on a trip sponsored by the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate William D. "Bro" Adams to be Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. Speer to be Assistant Secretary for Financial Management at the Department of the Army.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jonathan N. Stivers to be Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Asia at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ramin Toloui to be Deputy Under Secretary for International Finance at the Department of the Treasury and, upon appointment, designate him as Assistant Secretary for International Finance.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alice G. Wells to be Ambassador to Jordan.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lee T. Bycel as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Mostafa A. El-Sayed as a member of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science.

The President announced his intention to appoint Stephen R. Gephard, Patrick C. Keliher, and Daniel S. Morris as Commissioners on the Council of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization.

The President announced the nomination of Nancy B. Firestone, Lydia K. Griggsby, and Thomas L. Halkowski to be judges on the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

The President declared a major disaster in Maryland and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a snowstorm on February 12 and 13.

April 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to New York City.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to Washington, DC, arriving early the following morning.

The White House announced that the President will present the 2013 Commander in Chief's Trophy to the U.S. Naval Academy football team at the White House on April 18.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the canonization mass of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II in the Holy See (VaticanCity) on April 27: John D. Podesta (head of delegation); Xavier Becerra; and Katherine Beirne Fallon.

The President declared a major disaster in Tennessee and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe winter storm from March 2 through 4.

April 14

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with members of the Global Development Council. Later, in the East Room, he welcomed recipients of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE).

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with President François Hollande of France and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in eastern Ukraine, international concern over Russian troops on the Ukraine-Russia border, and diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis.

The White House announced that the President and Vice President Joe Biden will travel to Oakdale, PA, on April 16.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Jose "Pepe" Mujica Cordano of Uruguay to the White House on May 12.

April 15

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with faith leaders to discuss efforts to pass immigration reform legislation.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had separate telephone conversations with University of Connecticut men's basketball Head Coach Kevin Ollie and women's basketball Head Coach Geno Auriemma to congratulate them on their teams' victories in the NCAA championship games. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers. During the meeting, they observed a moment of silence to mark the first anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

In the evening, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President and Mrs. Obama hosted a Seder to mark the beginning of Passover.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti to the White House on May 5.

The White House announced that the President will present the Medal of Honor to Sgt. Kyle J. White, USA, on May 13.

April 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the East Room, he participated in a photo opportunity with the spring class of White House interns.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Pittsburgh, PA. Then, while en route to North Fayette Township, PA, he stopped to visit with Eric DiFiore, Kevin Stripp, Sean Conner, and Brett White, members of the band Comfort Tech, who performed an impromptu concert along the motorcade route. Later, at Community College of Allegheny County North Campus in North Fayette Township, PA, he, Vice President Biden, and Secretary of Commerce Penny S. Pritzker toured a classroom with mechatronics instructor Paul Blackford and visited with students.

Later in the afternoon, following his remarks at the West Hills Center in North Fayette Township, the President met with Pittsburgh, PA, resident Kimberly Francis, a self-employed cancer patient benefiting from the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and her parents Judith and Michael Sparlin. Then, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with House Republican Leader Eric I. Cantor to discuss immigration reform legislation. He also recorded an interview with Major Garrett of CBS News for later broadcast.

April 17

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the situation in eastern Ukraine, international concern over Russian troops on the Ukraine-Russia border, and diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis. Later, in the State Dining Room, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with representatives from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President, Vice President Biden, Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, and other senior advisers met with executives from the health insurance industry.

The President declared a major disaster in Montana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by ice jams and flooding from March 1 through 16.

April 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing, followed by a meeting with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob

J. Lew. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger and Executive Director Peter S. Gaytan to discuss issues related to veterans health care, benefits, and job training assistance.

The President announced his intention to appoint Larry R. Ellis as a member of the American Battle Monuments Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Howard Z. Borin and Grace Tsao-Wu as members of the Commission on Presidential Scholars.

April 20

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha attended an Easter Sunday service at Nineteenth Street Baptist Church.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Oso, WA, on April 22.

April 21

In the morning, on the South Lawn, the President and Mrs. Obama participated in White House Easter Egg Roll activities.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

April 22

In the morning, the President traveled to Everett, WA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, aboard Marine One, the President, Gov. Jay R. Inslee of Washington, Sens. Maria E. Cantwell and Patricia L. Murray, and Rep. Suzan K. DelBene took an aerial tour of the area affected by a mudslide in Oso, WA, on March 22. Then, upon arrival in Arlington, WA, he traveled to Oso, where, at the Oso Community Chapel, he met with families of victims killed in the mudslide. Later, he traveled to Arlington, WA, where, at the Snohomish County Fire District 25/Oso Fire Department firehouse, he met with first responders.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Tokyo, Japan, arriving the following evening.

The President declared a major disaster in Indiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe winter storm and snowstorm from January 5 through 9.

April 23

In the evening, upon arrival in Tokyo, Japan, the President traveled to the Hotel Okura Tokyo. Then, at Sukiyabashi Jiro restaurant, he had dinner with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline B. Kennedy, and National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice. Later, he returned to the Hotel Okura Tokyo, where he remained overnight.

April 24

In the morning, at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, the President participated in an arrival ceremony, followed by an inspection of the Guard of Honor and a state call with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan.

In the afternoon, at the Akasaka Palace in Tokyo, the President met with Shigeo Iizuka and Shigeru and Sakie Yokota, relatives of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea in the 1970s.

Later in the afternoon, the President toured the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan) with U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline B. Kennedy and Miraikan Chief Executive Director Mamoru Mohri. During the tour, he watched a prerecorded video message from International Space Station Commander Koichi Wakata of Japan and Flight Engineers Steve Swanson and Rick Mastracchio of the U.S. Then, he observed robotics demonstrations and met with students. Later, the President and Ambassador Kennedy toured the Meiji Jingu shrine. During the tour, he signed a prayer tablet and watched a traditional horseback archery demonstration. Then, he returned to the Hotel Okura Tokyo.

In the evening, at the Imperial Palace, the President participated in an after-dinner talk following a state dinner hosted by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members

of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition:

Jason Collins;
Misty Copeland;
Alonzo H. Mourning, Jr.;
Rachael Ray; and
Robert T. Shepardson.

The President announced his intention to appoint Michèle Taylor as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders:

N. Nina Ahmad;
Michael Byun;
Ravi Chaudhary;
Lian Cheun;
Billy Dec;
Bill Imada;
Kathy Ko Chin;
Dee Jay Mailer;
Diane Narasaki;
Shekar Narasimhan;
Mary Ann Young Okada;
Maulik Pancholy;
Linda X. Phan; and
Lorna May Ho Randlett.

April 25

In the morning, at the Hotel Okura Tokyo, the President met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families. Then, also at the Hotel Okura Tokyo, he participated in a farewell greeting with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan. Later, he traveled to Seoul, South Korea, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at the War Memorial of Korea in Seoul, the President participated in a wreath-laying ceremony. Then, he toured Gyeongbokgung Palace. Later, at the Blue House, he participated in an arrival ceremony with President Park Geun-hye of South Korea. Then, also at the Blue House, he signed the guest book and participated in an official photograph with President Park.

In the evening, at the Blue House, the President attended a working dinner with President Park. Later, he traveled to the Grand Hyatt Seoul hotel, where he participated in a conference call with President François Hollande of France, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy, and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the situation in eastern Ukraine, the steps taken by the Ukraine Government to comply with the April 17 joint statement by Ukraine, Russia, the European Union, and the U.S., and Russia's failure to support the accord. They also discussed Russia's continued escalation of the situation and agreed to coordinate efforts through the Group of Seven (G–7) and European Union to impose additional economic sanctions against Russia.

April 26

In the morning, the President traveled to the U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan in Seoul, where he and President Park Geun-hye of South Korea received a briefing from Gen. C. Michael Scaparrotti, USA, commander, U.S. Forces Korea.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Upon arrival, he traveled to Parliament Square, where, at the Parliament House, he participated in an arrival ceremony with King Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah and Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia. Later, he traveled to the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Istana Negara Palace. Later, he returned to the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel, where he remained overnight.

April 27

In the morning, at the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel, the President met with U.S. Embassy personnel. Then, he toured the Masjid Negara (National Mosque) with Grand Imam Tan Sri Dato' Syaikh Haji Ismail Bin Haji Muhammad and tour guide Abdul Rashid bin Md Isa. Later, he traveled to the Seri Perdana, the official residence of the Prime

Minister of Malaysia, where he met with Prime Minister Najib Razak and had a working lunch.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre in Cyberjaya, where he and Prime Minister Najib toured the center with Malaysian Treasury Secretary-General Mohd Irwan and visited with students. Later, he traveled to Kuala Lumpur.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to the Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel, where he met with civil society leaders.

April 28

In the morning, the President traveled to Manila, Philippines, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Malacanang Palace in Manila, where he participated in an arrival ceremony with President Benigno S. Aquino III of the Philippines. Then, in the Reception Hall, he signed the guest book. Later, in the State Dining Room, he attended a restricted bilateral meeting, followed by an expanded bilateral meeting, with President Aquino.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel, where he met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Malacanang Palace. Later, he returned to the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Gov. Michael D. Beebe of Arkansas to receive an update on the tornadoes that struck Central Arkansas on April 27, express his condolences for the loss of life, offer Federal assistance in the recovery efforts, and commend the work of first responders.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia to the White House on June 12.

April 29

In the morning, at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel, the President inspected the City Optimized Managed Electric Transport (COMET) e-jeep on display at the hotel. Later, he traveled to Fort Bonifacio in Taguig, Philippines. Then, at the American Manila Cemetery, he participated in a wreath-laying ceremony.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, AK, crossing the International Date Line and arriving in the morning. Then, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following afternoon.

The White House announced that the President will honor the 2014 National Teacher of the Year and finalists on May 1.

The President declared a major disaster in Arkansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on April 27.

April 30

The White House announced that the President will travel to Poland, Belgium, and France in June.

The President declared a major disaster in Mississippi and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning on April 28 and continuing.

May 1

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Sens. Patrick J. Leahy, Carl M. Levin, and Richard J. Durbin and Reps. Christopher Van Hollen and James P. McGovern to discuss negotiations to improve Cuba-U.S. relations. Vice President Joe Biden and National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice also attended.

The President announced his intention to nominate Tony G. Collins to be a member of the Advisory Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. Gordon to be Assistant Secretary for the Office of Planning, Evalua-

tion, and Policy Development for the Department of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cheryl A. LaFleur to be a Commissioner of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate David A. Mader to be Controller of the Office of Federal Financial Management in the Office of Management and Budget.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Maeda to be a member of the National Council on the Arts.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jeffrey A. Murawsky to be Under Secretary for Health at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marcia D. Occomy to be U.S. Director of the African Development Bank.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gentry O. Smith to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, with the rank of Ambassador, at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Debra S. Wada to be Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs at the Department of the Army.

The President announced his intention to nominate George A. Krol to be Ambassador to Kazakhstan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark W. Lippert to be Ambassador to South Korea.

The President announced his intention to nominate James D. Nealon to be Ambassador to Honduras.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dana Shell Smith to be Ambassador to Qatar.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jason W. Young as a member of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans.

The President announced the nomination of Pamela Pepper to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

May 2

In the morning, the President and Vice President Joe Biden welcomed Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to the White House. Then, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden had a bilateral meeting with Chancellor Merkel.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President and Vice President Biden had a working lunch with Chancellor Merkel and other German and U.S. officials. Later, in the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with Asian American and Pacific Islander business and faith leaders to discuss immigration reform.

The President declared a major disaster in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, winds, and flooding beginning on April 28 and continuing.

May 4

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan to offer his condolences for the loss of life in the May 2 landslide in Badakhshan Province and discuss Afghan Government response efforts and international assistance.

May 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Luis Guillermo Solís as President of Costa Rica in San Jose, Costa Rica, on May 8: Regina McCarthy (head of delegation); Gonzalo R. Gallegos; and Francisco Palmieri.

The White House announced that the President will travel to the Los Angeles area on May 7.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Central Arkansas on May 7.

May 6

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Rose Garden, the President recorded separate interviews with local and national meteorologists participating in the "Weather From the White House" program for later broadcast. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

The White House announced that the President will travel to San Diego, CA, on May 8.

The White House announced that the President will travel to San Jose, CA, on May 8.

The White House announced that the President will present the Medal of Honor to former Sgt. Kyle J. White, USA, on May 13.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from April 28 through May 6.

May 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Little Rock, AR.

In the afternoon, aboard Marine One, he, Gov. Michael D. Beebe, Sen. Mark L. Pryor, and Rep. Tim Griffin took an aerial tour of the areas damaged by the tornado that struck Central Arkansas on April 27. Later, he traveled to Los Angeles, CA.

In the evening, at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza hotel in Los Angeles, the President attended a USC Shoah Foundation dinner, where he was presented with the Ambassador for Humanity Award by the foundation's founder, filmmaker Steven Spielberg. Later, he traveled to the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills, CA, where he remained overnight.

May 8

In the morning, at the Beverly Hilton hotel, the President participated in a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser. Later, he traveled to La Jolla, CA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to San Jose, CA. Later, at a private residence, he participated in a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser. Later, he traveled to the Fairmont San Jose Hotel, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Michelle Bachelet Jeria of Chile to the White House on June 30.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert S. Beecroft to be Ambassador to Egypt.

The President announced his intention to nominate Stuart E. Jones to be Ambassador to Iraq.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lisa Mensah to be Under Secretary for Rural Development at the Department of Agriculture.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rick Spinrad as Chief Scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced the nomination of Pamela Harris to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

The President announced the nomination of Brenda K. Sannes to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York.

May 9

In the morning, the President traveled to Mountain View, CA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The President announced his intention to appoint Julie A. Petty as Chair of the President's Committee for People With Intellectual Disabilities.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Committee for People With Intellectual Disabilities:

Peter V. Berns;
Jack Martin Brandt;
Kenneth Capone;
Micah Fialka-Feldman;
Zachary W. Holler;
Lisa Pugh;
Michelle C. Reynolds;
Deborah M. Spitalnik;
Elizabeth Weintraub; and
Sheryl White-Scott.

May 12

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will travel to the New York City area on May 14.

May 13

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President joined National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces President Ahmad al-Jarba to discuss the situation in Syria.

May 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to New York City. Upon arrival, he traveled to Tarrytown, NY. Later, he returned to New York City, where, at the InterContinental New York Times Square hotel, he attended a Democratic National Committee fundraiser.

In the evening, the President traveled to the InterContinental New York Barlcay hotel, where he and Mrs. Obama remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the Super Bowl XLVIII Champion Seattle Seahawks to the White House on May 21.

The President announced his intention to nominate Victor M. Mendez to be Deputy Secretary at the Department of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert S. Adler to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Peter M. Rogoff to be Under Secretary for Policy at the Department of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ted Osius to be Ambassador to Vietnam.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joan A. Polaschik to be Ambassador to Algeria.

The President announced his intention to appoint Thomas J. Reese and Eric P. Schwartz as members of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

May 15

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Obama toured the National September 11 Memorial & Museum with former Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City and his companion Diana L. Taylor, former President William J. Clinton, and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Later, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

May 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, he had a telephone conversation with President Abdullah Gul of Turkey to express his condolences for the loss of life due to a coal mine accident in Soma, Turkey, on May 13 and offer U.S. assistance. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the situations in Ukraine and Nigeria and the upcoming conference in Paris on improving regional cooperation to combat the threat posed by the Boko Haram terrorist organization.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister-elect Narendra Modi of India to congratulate him on his party's victory in parliamentary elections, discuss India-U.S. relations, and invite Prime Minister-elect Modi to visit Washington, DC. Then, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew. Later, in the East Room, he met with families of the plaintiffs in the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* U.S. Supreme Court case, as well as members of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and two lead

attorneys in the case, Jack Greenberg and William Coleman.

May 17

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India to thank him for his leadership, discuss India-U.S. relations, and offer his continued support under Prime Minister-elect Narendra Modi.

May 19

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch with combatant commanders. Later, he traveled to Potomac, MD. While en route, he stopped at Friendship Park in the Cathedral Heights neighborhood of Washington, DC, where he visited with members of the Northwest Little League baseball teams and threw the first pitch of the game.

In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will host a signing event for the proclamation establishing the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument in New Mexico on May 21 at the Department of the Interior.

The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor to Cpl. W. Kyle Carpenter, USMC, on June 19.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister John P. Key of New Zealand to the White House on June 20.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Salvador Sanchéz Cerén as President of El Salvador in San Salvador, El Salvador, on June 1:

Maria Contreras-Sweet (head of delegation);
Mari del Carmen Aponte;
Thomas A. Shannon, Jr.;
Ricardo Zuniga; and
John D. Feeley.

The President announced his intention to nominate Geoffrey W. Crawford to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Vermont.

The President announced the appointment of Jennifer Yeager Kaplan as Director of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

May 20

In the morning, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with U.S. and international business leaders to discuss trade and investment opportunities under the Department of Commerce's SelectUSA initiative.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Mrs. Obama participated in an interview with Maggie Murphy and Lynn Sherr of Parade magazine. Later, in the East Room, he dropped by the White House Turnaround Arts Talent Show, a student event hosted by Mrs. Obama, and made brief remarks. Then, in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Cooperstown, NY, on May 22.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Chicago, IL, on May 22.

May 21

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President received an update from Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki and White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Robert L. Nabors II on the situation at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Later, also in the Oval Office, he participated in a credentialing ceremony for newly appointed Ambassadors to the U.S.

Later in the afternoon, while walking to the Department of the Interior with Counselor to the President John D. Podesta, the President stopped on the Ellipse to visit with tourists.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with King Abdullah II of Jordan to discuss the situation in Syria and reaffirm Jordan-U.S. relations.

The President announced the nomination of Armando O. Bonilla, Patricia M. McCarthy, and Jeri K. Somers to be judges on the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

May 22

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with chief executive officers from the travel and tourism industry to discuss the national economy and tourism's role in boosting growth.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Cooperstown, NY, where he toured the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum with Hall of Fame President Jeffrey L. Idelson and 2010 inductee Andre N. Dawson. Later, he traveled to Chicago, IL.

In the evening, upon arrival in Chicago, the President traveled to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will host the 2014 White House Science Fair on May 27.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bruce H. Andrews to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat to be Ambassador to Bangladesh.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marcus D. Jadotte to be Assistant Secretary for Industry and Analysis at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate James D. Pettit to be Ambassador to Moldova.

The President announced his intention to nominate Laura S. Wertheimer to be Inspector General of the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

The President announced his intention to appoint Caitlin K. Cahow as a member of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition.

The President announced his intention to appoint Steven Croley as a member of the Council of the Administrative Conference of the U.S.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jane Jelenko as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint John S. Kem as a Commissioner of the Mississippi River Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint George A. Elmaraghy, Tom FitzGerald, and Susan Hedman as Commissioners of the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission.

May 23

In the morning, at Valois Restaurant, the President had breakfast with Gov. Patrick J. Quinn III of Illinois and visited with patrons. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a bill signing ceremony for H.R. 685, the American Fighter Aces Congressional Gold Medal Act, and H.R.1209, awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the "Doolittle Tokyo Raiders."

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Jacob Zuma of South Africa to congratulate him on his reelection.

May 24

In the evening, the President traveled to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, arriving the following evening. Musician Brad D. Paisley accompanied him aboard Air Force One.

May 25

In the evening, at Bagram Air Base, the President toured the Joint Operating Center with U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan James B. Cunningham and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Commander Gen. Joseph F. Dumford, Jr., USA. Later, at the base military hospital, he met with wounded U.S. servicemembers. Then, also at Bagram Air Base, he had a telephone conversation with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan to congratulate him on the progress being made by the Afghan military and security forces and the successful first round of Presidential elections and express support for an Afghan-led reconciliation process with the Taliban.

Later in the evening, the President traveled to Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, arriving early the following morning.

The White House announced that the President will travel to West Point, NY, on May 28 to deliver the commencement address at the U.S. Military Academy.

May 26

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the State Dining Room, he hosted a breakfast in honor of Memorial Day. Vice President Joe Biden and his wife Jill T. Biden also attended. Later, he, Mrs. Obama, Vice President Biden, and Mrs. Biden traveled to Arlington, VA, where, at Arlington National Cemetery, they participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, Vice President Biden, and Mrs. Biden returned to Washington, DC.

May 27

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with President-elect Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine to congratulate him on his May 25 election victory and offer U.S. support and assistance as Ukraine implements economic and democratic reforms. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar to discuss the transfer of five members of the Afghan Taliban from the U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay detention center in Cuba to Qatari custody in Doha, Qatar, in exchange for the release of Sgt. Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, by Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Later, in the State Dining Room, Red Room, and Blue Room, he viewed projects on exhibit for the White House Science Fair.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

The White House announced that the President will host a Healthy Kids & Safe Sports Concussion Summit on May 29.

May 28

In the morning, the President traveled to Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, NY. Upon arrival, he traveled to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY.

In the afternoon, at the residence of Academy Superintendent Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, Jr., USA, the President recorded an interview with Steve Inskeep of NPR's "Morning Edition" program for later broadcast. Then, he returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

During the day, while on the West Point campus, the President met with former Amir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani of Qatar to discuss the transfer of five members of the Afghan Taliban from the U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay detention center in Cuba to Qatari custody in Doha, Qatar, in exchange for the release of Sgt. Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, by Taliban forces in Afghanistan.

May 29

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Later, on the South Lawn, he joined students participating in a sports clinic as part of the White House Healthy Kids & Safe Sports Concussion Summit.

During the day, in the Blue Room, the President recorded an interview with Kelly Ripa and Michael Strahan of ABC's "Live! With Kelly & Michael" program for later broadcast.

May 30

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki and Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Robert L. Nabors II. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan D. Gibson.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch. Later, at Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters, he received a briefing on Federal preparedness efforts ahead of the 2014 hurricane season from

Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator Kathryn Sullivan, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson, and Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate. Later, at the Children's National Medical Center, he visited with children being treated for asthma and other respiratory illnesses aggravated by air pollution.

May 31

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Robert and Jani Bergdahl, parents of Sgt. Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, who was released from captivity by Taliban forces in Afghanistan earlier in the day.

June 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a meeting with his senior advisers.

In the evening, the President traveled to Warsaw, Poland, arriving the following morning.

June 3

In the morning, upon arrival at Warsaw Chopin Airport in Warsaw, the President and President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland toured a hangar housing F–16 aircraft and met with U.S. and Polish military personnel. Later, at Belweder Palace in Warsaw, he met with President Komorowski.

In the afternoon, at Koniecpolski Palace in Warsaw, the President participated in a photograph with Central and Eastern European leaders. Then, he traveled to the Warsaw Marriott Hotel.

In the evening, at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the President attended a Solidarity Dinner. Then, he returned to the Warsaw Marriott Hotel, where he remained overnight.

The President announced his intention to nominate John R. Bass to be Ambassador to Turkey.

The President announced his intention to nominate Leslie Ann Bassett to be Ambassador to Paraguay.

The President announced his intention to nominate Allan P. Mustard to be Ambassador to Turkmenistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Todd D. Robinson to be Ambassador to Guatemala.

The President announced his intention to appoint Maurice Obstfeld as a member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The President announced his intention to appoint Shefali Razdan Duggal as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

June 4

In the morning, at the Warsaw Marriott Hotel, the President met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families. Later, at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, he participated in a family photo with leaders attending the Freedom Day commemoration.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Brussels, Belgium, where, upon arrival, he traveled to The Hotel.

In the evening, at the Royal Palace of Brussels, the President participated in an official photograph followed by a meeting with King Philippe and Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo of Belgium. Later, at the Justus Lipsius Building in Brussels, the headquarters of the Council of the European Union, he participated in a photograph with European Commission President José Manuel Durão Barroso and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy. Then, also at the Justus Lipsius Building, he attended a working dinner with Group of Seven (G–7) leaders. Later, he returned to The Hotel, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the 2014 NCAA Champion University of Connecticut men's and women's basketball teams to the White House on June 9.

June 5

In the morning, at the Justus Lipsius Building, the President attended a Group of Seven (G–7) leaders meeting on the global economy. Then, also at the Justus Lipsius Building, he participated in an official photograph with G–7 leaders, followed by a G–7 leaders meeting on energy and climate issues.

In the afternoon, at the Justus Lipsius Building, the President participated in a working lunch with Group of Seven (G–7) leaders on development. Then, also at the Justus Lipsius Building, he met with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom. Later, he traveled to Paris, France, where, upon arrival, he traveled to the U.S. Ambassador's residence.

In the evening, at Le Chiberta restaurant in Paris, the President had dinner with President François Hollande of France. They were joined by Secretary of State John F. Kerry, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Laurent Fabius and Director General for Political Affairs and Security Jacques Audibert of France. Later, at Restaurant Helen, he met with National Security Adviser Rice, White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett, and Laurent Delanney of Monte-Carlo, Monaco, a friend of the President. Then, he returned to the U.S. Ambassador's residence, where he remained overnight.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kevin F. O'Malley to be Ambassador to Ireland.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jessie H. Roberson to be a member of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, and upon appointment, to designate him as Vice Chair.

The President announced his intention to nominate Daniel J. Santos to be a member of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Petro Poroshenko as President of Ukraine in Kiev, Ukraine, on June 7:

Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (head of delegation);
Geoffrey R. Pyatt;
John S. McCain III;
Ron H. Johnson;
Christopher S. Murphy;
Marcia C. Kaptur;
Daniel B. Baer; and
Victoria J. Nuland.

June 6

In the morning, the President traveled to Carpiquet, France. Upon arrival, he traveled to Omaha Beach in Normandy, where he met with U.S. military veterans and servicemembers. Later, at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, he toured the observation deck with President François Hollande of France.

In the afternoon, while at Omaha Beach, the President recorded an interview with Brian Williams of NBC's "NBC Nightly News With Brian Williams" program for later broadcast. Then, he traveled to Bénouville, France, where, at the Château de Bénouville, he participated in a photo opportunity for leaders attending the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the D-day landing at Normandy, followed by a heads-of-state lunch. At the conclusion of the lunch, he met informally with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in Ukraine. President Obama emphasized the need for Russia to recognize President-elect Petro Poroshenko as the legitimate leader of Ukraine, end support for separatists in eastern Ukraine, stop the provision of arms across the Russia-Ukraine border, and work with the Ukrainian Government to reduce tensions. He also indicated that failure to take these steps would increase Russia's international isolation.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Ouistreham, France, where, at Sword Beach, he attended the Ouistreham International Ceremony commemorating the 70th anniversary of D-day. Then, he returned to Paris, France, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, at Paris Orly International Airport, the President met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families. Then, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the Women's National Basketball Association Champion Minnesota Lynx to the White House on June 12.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the opening of the

2014 FIFA World Cup in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on June 12:

Daniel H. Pfeiffer (head of delegation);
Liliana Ayalde;
Michelle Akers; and
Gabrielle Reece.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jane D. Hartley to be Ambassador to France.

The President Obama announced his intention to nominate Cary Douglas Pugh to be a judge on the U.S. Tax Court.

The President announced his intention to appoint Mia Guttfreund Lehrer as a member of the Commission of Fine Arts.

June 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with nurses from across the country to discuss immigration reform.

In the afternoon, the President and White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough walked to the local Starbucks for coffee, greeting people along the way. Later, in the Situation Room, he participated in a video teleconference with Governors from eight Western States to discuss the ongoing severe drought in the West, efforts to prepare for the upcoming wildfire season, and Federal funding for wildfire suppression efforts.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Worcester, MA, on June 11.

June 10

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Alexandria, VA, where, at FireFlies restaurant, he had lunch with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, had a telephone conversation with owner Marylisa Lichens, and greeted patrons. Then, he returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Abdelfattah Said Elsisi of Egypt to congratulate him on his Inauguration, convey his commitment to advancing Egypt-U.S. relations, and reiterate U.S. support for human rights in Egypt.

June 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with members of the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Worcester, MA. Later, he traveled to Weston, MA.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Cannon Ball, ND, on June 13.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Palm Springs, CA, on June 13.

The White House announced that the President will travel to the Los Angeles area and Anaheim, CA, on June 14.

The President declared a major disaster in Vermont and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from April 15 through 18.

June 12

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch.

During the day, the President met with the National Security Council to discuss the situation in Iraq.

The President announced an updated designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the opening of the 2014 Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup game in Sao Paulo, Brazil on June 12: H. Daniel Pfeiffer (head of delegation); Liliana Ayalde; and Tiffany Roberts Sahaydak.

The White House announced further details on the President's awarding of the Medal of Honor to Cpl. W. Kyle Carpenter, USMC, on June 19.

June 13

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Obama traveled to Cannon Ball, ND, arriving in the afternoon. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada to discuss the situations in Iraq and Ukraine and the recent Group of Seven (G–7) meetings.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama participated in a roundtable discussion with Native American youth. Later, they traveled to Rancho Mirage, CA. Upon arrival, they traveled to the private residence of U.S. Ambassador to Spain James Costos, where they remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will host the White House Maker Faire on June 18.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Pittsburgh, PA, on June 17.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania:

Wendy Beetlestone;
Mark A. Kearney;
Joseph F. Leeson, Jr.; and
Gerald J. Pappert.

The President announced his intention to nominate Victor A. Bolden to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut.

The President announced his intention to nominate Erica J. Barks Ruggles to be Ambassador to Rwanda.

The President announced his intention to nominate Brent R. Hartley to be Ambassador to Slovenia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Donald L. Heflin to be Ambassador to Cabo Verde.

The President announced his intention to nominate Earl R. Miller to be Ambassador to Botswana.

The President announced his intention to nominate David Pressman to be U.S. Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs to the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the National Science Board for the National Science Foundation:

John Anderson;
Roger N. Beachy;
Vicki Chandler;
Robert M. Groves;
James S. Jackson; and
Sethuraman Panchanathan.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rodney Ewing as Chairman of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board:

Sue Clark;
Linda Nozick;
Kenneth Peddicord; and
Paul Turinsky.

June 14

In the morning, the President traveled to Laguna Beach, CA, where, at a private residence, he participated in a Democratic National Committee fundraiser. Later, he traveled to Anaheim, CA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Rancho Mirage, CA.

In the evening, the President returned to the private residence of U.S. Ambassador to Spain James Costos, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President received telephone updates on the situation in Iraq from National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice.

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard R. Kasher as Chair of Presidential Emergency Board No. 246.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ann S. Kenis and Bonnie S. Weinstock as members of Presidential Emergency Board No. 246.

June 15

In the morning, the President received a telephone update on the situation in Iraq from National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with King Juan Carlos I of Spain to congratulate him on his reign ahead of the upcoming investiture of his son, Crown Prince Felipe, and reaffirm Spain-U.S. relations.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on June 17.

June 16

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

In the evening, the President met with the National Security Council to discuss the situation in Iraq and review possible response options.

June 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Pittsburgh, PA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President toured the facilities of TechShop Pittsburgh, a community workshop and prototyping studio, with General Manager Matt Verlinich. Later, he traveled to New York City, where, at the Intercontinental New York Times Square hotel, he attended a roundtable event for the Senate Majority PAC.

In the evening, at a private residence, the President attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser and dinner. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Nebraska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding on May 11 and 12.

June 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, on the South Lawn, he viewed projects exhibited as part of the White House Maker Faire.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President had a working lunch with economists Anat Admati, Alan S. Blinder, Erik Brynjolfsson, Roland Fryer, Claudia Goldin, and Paul Krugman to discuss efforts to accelerate economic growth, expand opportunity, and improve U.S. business competitiveness. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell, Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi to discuss the situation in Iraq and review possible response options.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

June 19

In the morning, in the Situation Room, the President met with his national security team to discuss the situation in Iraq and review possible response options.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico to discuss joint efforts to respond to the influx of unaccompanied alien children across the Mexico-U.S. border and ways to advance immigration reform.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jonathan A. Yuen as a member of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

The President announced his intention to appoint Earl E. Krygier as the U.S. Commissioner of the United States Section of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities:

Susan Axelrod;
James T. Brett;
Dan Habib;
Stacey Milbern;
Susana Ramirez;
Ricardo Thornton, Sr.; and
Betty Williams.

The President announced the noimation of David J. Hale and Greg N. Stivers to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Kentucky.

The President announced the nomination of Arthur L. Bentley III to be U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Florida.

The President announced the nomination of David Rivera to be U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee.

June 20

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Head Coach Gregg Popovich of the National Basketball Association's San Antonio Spurs to congratulate him on his team's victory in the NBA Finals.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and President François Hollande of France to discuss the situations in Ukraine and Iraq. Also during the day, he had a telephone conversation with Dustin Brown, captain of the National Hockey League's Los Angeles Kings, to congratulate him on his performance in the Stanley Cup Championship and commend his role as a leader on the U.S. men's hockey team for the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia.

The White House announced that the President will welcome 2013 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion Jimmie Johnson to the White House on June 25.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carolyn Watts Colvin to be Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

June 22

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President and Mrs. Obama hosted a reception for Ford's Theatre.

June 23

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in Ukraine, the removal of chemical weapons from Syria, and ongoing diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

In the afternoon, at Chipotle Mexican Grill, the President had lunch with White House Summit on Working Families attendees Lisa Rumain of Martinsville, NJ, Roger Trombley of Ann Arbor, MI, Shelby Ramirez of Denver, CO, and Shirley Young of New York City. Later, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, he participated in a roundtable discussion at the White House Summit on Working Families.

The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor to S. Sgt. Ryan M. Pitts, USA, on July 21.

June 24

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the situations in Ukraine and Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Minneapolis, MN, on June 26.

June 25

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy to discuss the situation in Ukraine. Then, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he and President Shimon Peres of Israel dropped by a meeting of leaders of the U.S. Jewish community.

In the afternoon, the President and Vice President Biden had a working lunch with President Peres. Then, in the Oval Office, he met with President Peres. Later, on the State Floor, he and Vice President Biden met with members of the Senate Democratic Caucus.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration

of Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez as President of Panama in Panama City, Panama, on July 1:

John F. Kerry;
Jonathan D. Farrar;
Deval L. Patrick; and
Roberta S. Jacobson.

June 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, he was briefed by his homeland security team on the floods affecting parts of Minnesota. Later, he traveled to Minneapolis, MN, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at Matt's Bar & Grill in Minneapolis, the President had lunch with St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler, who had written a letter to the President describing the economic challenges faced by her family. Later, he traveled to Saint Paul, MN, where, at Golden Fig food market, he purchased items and met with owner Laurie McCann Crowell, who had written a letter to the President inviting him to visit the store. Then, he walked to the Grand Ole Creamery ice cream shop, where he greeted patrons and purchased ice cream.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel in Bloomington, MN, where he remained overnight.

The President announced the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the final match of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on July 13:

Heather A. Higginbottom (head of delegation);
Liliana Ayalde;
Jonathan McBride;
John P. Bilbrey; and
Cobi Jones.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher Hart to be Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate John W. Leslie, Jr., to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. African Development Foundation, and upon appointment, to designate him as Chairperson.

The President announced his intention to appoint Donald L. Pereira and Douglas L. Stang as Commissioners of the U.S. Section of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

The President announced the nomination of Madeline Cox Arleo to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey.

The President announced the nomination of Amos L. Mazzant III and Robert W. Schroeder III to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas.

The President announced the nomination of Robert L. Pitman to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas.

June 27

In the morning, the President traveled to Minneapolis, MN, where, at the Minnesota Workforce Development Center, he, Sen. Al Franken, and Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez visited with young mothers participating in a job training program.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan D. Gibson and Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Robert L. Nabors II to discuss efforts to implement reforms and improve care in the Veterans Health Administration.

In the evening, at the Marine Barracks, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughter Sasha attended the Evening Parade.

During the day, in the Blue Room, the President recorded an interview with Norah O'Donnell of CBS's "CBS This Morning" program for later broadcast. He also recorded separate interviews with Mika Brzezinski of MSNBC's "Morning Joe" program and Kate Bolduan of CNN's "New Day" program for later broadcast.

The White House announced that the President will deliver remarks on the economy at the Georgetown Waterfront Park on July 1.

June 29

In the afternoon, the President and his daughter Sasha traveled to Great Falls National Park in McLean, VA. Later, they returned to Washington, DC.

June 30

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Secretary-designate of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald walked through Lafayette Park.

Appendix B—Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted January 6

Jill A. Pryor,
of Georgia, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the 11th Circuit, vice Stanley F. Birch, Jr., retired.

Carolyn B. McHugh,
of Utah, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the 10th Circuit, vice Michael R. Murphy, retired.

Michelle T. Friedland,
of California, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Raymond C. Fisher, retired.

Nancy L. Moritz,
of Kansas, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the 10th Circuit, vice Deanell Reece Tacha, retired.

John B. Owens,
of California, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Stephen S. Trott, retired.

David Jeremiah Barron,
of Massachusetts, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the First Circuit, vice Michael Boudin, retired.

Robin S. Rosenbaum,
of Florida, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the 11th Circuit, vice Rosemary Barkett, resigned.

Julie E. Carnes,
of Georgia, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the 11th Circuit, vice James Larry Edmondson, retired.

Gregg Jeffrey Costa,
of Texas, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, vice Fortunato P. Benavides, retired.

Rosemary Márquez,
of Arizona, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Arizona, vice Frank R. Zapata, retired.

Pamela L. Reeves,
of Tennessee, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee, vice Thomas W. Phillips, retiring.

Timothy L. Brooks,
of Arkansas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas, vice Jimm Larry Hendren, retired.

Jeffrey Alker Meyer,
of Connecticut, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Connecticut, vice Mark R. Kravitz, deceased.

James Donato,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, vice James Ware, retired.

Beth Labson Freeman,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, vice an additional position in accordance with 28 USC 133(b)(1).

Jennifer Prescod May-Parker,
of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina, vice Malcolm J. Howard, retired.

Pedro A. Delgado Hernández,
of Puerto Rico, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico, vice Daniel R. Dominguez, retired.

Bruce Howe Hendricks,
of South Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of South Carolina, vice Margaret B. Seymour, retired.

Alison Renee Lee,
of South Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of South Carolina, vice Cameron M. Currie, retiring.

Vince Girdhari Chhabria,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, vice Susan Y. Illston, retired.

Matthew Frederick Leitman,
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, vice Marianne O. Battani, retired.

Judith Ellen Levy,
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, vice Nancy G. Edmunds, retired.

Laurie J. Michelson,
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, vice George Caram Steeh III, retired.

James Maxwell Moody Jr.,
of Arkansas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas, vice Susan Webber Wright, retiring.

Linda Vivienne Parker,
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, vice Robert H. Cleland, retired.

Christopher Reid Cooper,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice Royce C. Lamberth, retired.

Daniel D. Crabtree,
of Kansas, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Kansas, vice John W. Lungstrum, retired.

M. Douglas Harpool,
of Missouri, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Missouri, vice Richard E. Dorr, deceased.

Sheryl H. Lipman,
of Tennessee, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, vice Jon P. McCalla, retired.

Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr.,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Harvey Bartle, III, retired.

Edward G. Smith,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Berle M. Schiller, retired.

Cynthia Ann Bashant,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of California, vice Irma E. Gonzalez, retired.

Stanley Allen Bastian,
of Washington, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington, vice Edward F. Shea, retired.

Diane J. Humetewa,
of Arizona, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Arizona, vice Mary H. Murguia, elevated.

Jon David Levy,
of Maine, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Maine, vice George Z. Singal, retired.

Steven Paul Logan,
of Arizona, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Arizona, vice James A. Teilborg, retired.

Douglas L. Rayes,
of Arizona, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Arizona, vice Frederick J. Martone, retired.

Manish S. Shah,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice Joan Humphrey Lefkow, retired.

John Joseph Tuchi,
of Arizona, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Arizona, vice Roslyn Moore-Silver, retired.

Mark G. Mastroianni,
of Massachusetts, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, vice Michael A. Ponsor, retired.

Indira Talwani,
of Massachusetts, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, vice Mark L. Wolf, retired.

Theodore David Chuang,
of Maryland, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Maryland, vice Roger W. Titus, retiring.

George Jarrod Hazel,
of Maryland, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Maryland, vice Alexander Williams, Jr., retired.

James D. Peterson,
of Wisconsin, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Wisconsin, vice John C. Shabaz, retired.

Nancy J. Rosenstengel,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois, vice G. Patrick Murphy, retiring.

Ronnie L. White,
of Missouri, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri, vice Jean C. Hamilton, retired.

Michael P. Boggs,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, vice Julie E. Carnes.

Tanya S. Chutkan,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice an additional position in accordance with 28 U.S.C. 133(b)(1).

Mark Howard Cohen,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, vice Clarence Cooper, retired.

M. Hannah Lauck,
of Virginia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, vice James R. Spencer, retiring.

Leigh Martin May,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, vice Beverly B. Martin, elevated.

Eleanor Louise Ross,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, vice Charles A. Pannell, Jr., retired.

Leo T. Sorokin,
of Massachusetts, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, vice Joseph L. Tauro, retired.

James Alan Soto,
of Arizona, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Arizona, vice David C. Bury, retired.

Gary Blankinship,
of Texas, to be U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Texas for the term of 4 years, vice Ruben Monzon, resigned.

Robert L. Hobbs,
of Texas, to be U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Texas for the term of 4 years, vice John Lee Moore, term expired.

Amos Rojas, Jr.,
of Florida, to be U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Florida for the term of 4 years, vice Christina Pharo, term expired.

Peter C. Tobin,
of Ohio, to be U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Ohio for a term of 4 years, vice Cathy Jo Jones, resigned.

Damon Paul Martinez,
of New Mexico, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of New Mexico for the term of 4 years, vice Kenneth J. Gonzales, resigned.

Andrew Mark Luger,
of Minnesota, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota for the term of 4 years, vice B. Todd Jones, term expired.

Kevin W. Techau,
of Iowa, to be U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa for the term of 4 years, vice Stephanie M. Rose, resigned.

William Ward Nooter,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice A. Franklin Burgess, retired.

Sherry Moore Trafford,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Natalia Combs Greene, retired.

Steven M. Wellner,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Kaye K. Christian, retired.

Henry J. Aaron,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Social Security Advisory Board for a term expiring September 30, 2020 (reappointment).

Henry J. Aaron,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Social Security Advisory Board for a term expiring September 30, 2014, vice Jeffrey Robert Brown, term expired.

Debo P. Adegbile,
of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Thomas E. Perez, resigned.

Cynthia H. Akuetteh,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

Larry Edward André, Jr.
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Steven Joel Anthony,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2018, vice Jerome F. Kever, term expired.

David J. Arroyo,
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2016, vice Elizabeth Courtney, term expired.

Tamara Wenda Ashford,
of Virginia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Tax Court for a term of 15 years, vice Mary Ann Cohen, retired.

Leslie E. Bains,
of New York, to be a Director of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation for a term expiring December 31, 2015, vice William S. Jasien, term expired.

Alfredo J. Balsera,
of Florida, to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2014, vice Elizabeth F. Bagley, term expired.

Alfredo J. Balsera,
of Florida, to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2017 (reappointment).

Robert C. Barber,
of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Iceland.

Tommy Port Beaudreau,
of Alaska, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, vice Rhea S. Suh.

Colleen Bradley Bell,
of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Hungary.

David Michael Bennett,
of North Carolina, to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2018, vice Thurgood Marshall, Jr., term expired.

Timothy M. Broas,
of Maryland, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Thomas A. Burke,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Paul T. Anastas, resigned.

Dwight L. Bush, Sr.,
of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Morocco.

Leslie Ragon Caldwell,
of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Lanny A. Breuer, resigned.

John P. Carlin,
of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Lisa O. Monaco, resigned.

Michael G. Carroll,
of New York, to be Inspector General, U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Donald A. Gambatesa, resigned.

Brad R. Carson,
of Oklahoma, to be Under Secretary of the Army, vice Joseph W. Westphal.

Arnold A. Chacon,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Director General of the Foreign Service, vice Linda Thomas-Greenfield, resigned.

Lanhee J. Chen,
of California, to be a member of the Social Security Advisory Board for a term expiring September 30, 2018, vice Mark J. Warshawsky, term expired.

Mark Bradley Childress,
of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Republic of Tanzania.

Alan L. Cohen,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Social Security Advisory Board for a term expiring September 30, 2016, vice Dana K. Bilyeu, term expired.

James Cole, Jr.,
of New York, to be General Counsel, Department of Education, vice Charles P. Rose.

Nani A. Coloretti,
of California, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of the Treasury, vice Daniel M. Tangherlini, resigned.

Michael L. Connor,
of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior, vice David J. Hayes, resigned.

Elisebeth Collins Cook,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board for a term expiring January 29, 2020 (reappointment).

France A. Cordova,
of New Mexico, to be Director of the National Science Foundation for a term of 6 years, vice Subra Suresh, resigned.

Maureen Elizabeth Cormack,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Stephen Crawford,
of Maryland, to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service for the remainder of the term expiring December 8, 2015, vice Alan C. Kessler, resigned.

Madelyn R. Creedon,
of Indiana, to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration, vice Neile L. Miller, resigned.

Bathsheba Nell Crocker,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Organization Affairs), vice Esther Brimmer, resigned.

Steven Croley,
of Michigan, to be General Counsel of the Department of Energy, vice Gregory Howard Woods.

Thomas Frederick Daughton,
of Arizona, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Namibia.

Karen Dynan,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Janice Eberly.

Jonathan Elkind,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (International Affairs), vice David B. Sandalow, resigned.

Richard J. Engler,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for a term of 5 years, vice William E. Wright, term expired.

John L. Estrada,
of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Camilla C. Feibelman,
of New Mexico, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring April 15, 2017, vice Stephen M. Prescott, term expired.

Wanda Felton,
of New York, to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2017 (reappointment).

Richard G. Frank,
of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, vice Sherry Glied, resigned.

Anthony Luzzatto Gardner,
of New York, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Mark D. Gearan,
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring December 1, 2015 (reappointment).

J. Christopher Giancarlo,
of New Jersey, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for the remainder of the term expiring April 13, 2014, vice Jill Sommers, resigned.

Sloan D. Gibson,
of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, vice W. Scott Gould.

Mark Gilbert,
of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to New Zealand, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Independent State of Samoa.

Rose Eilene Gottemoeller,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, vice Ellen O. Tauscher, resigned.

Robert James Grey, Jr.,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2014 (reappointment).

Robert James Grey, Jr.,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2017 (reappointment).

Pamela K. Hamamoto,
of Hawaii, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador.

Michael A. Hammer,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Chile.

Tony Hammond,
of Missouri, to be a Commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission for a term expiring October 14, 2018 (reappointment).

Jo Emily Handelsman,
of Connecticut, to be an Associate Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, vice Carl Wieman, resigned.

Keith M. Harper,
of Maryland, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the U.N. Human Rights Council.

Matthew T. Harrington,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Bruce Heyman,
of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Canada.

Joseph S. Hezir,
of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Energy, vice Steven Jeffrey Isakowitz, resigned.

Thomas Hicks,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Election Assistance Commission for a term expiring December 12, 2017, vice Gracia M. Hillman, term expired.

Jon M. Holladay,
of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Agriculture, vice Evan J. Segal.

John Hoover,
of Massachusetts, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Michael Stephen Hoza,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cameroon.

Amy Jane Hyatt,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of

the United States of America to the Republic of Palau.

Dana J. Hyde,
of Maryland, to be Chief Executive Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation, vice Daniel W. Yohannes.

Paul Nathan Jaenichen, Sr.,
of Kentucky, to be Administrator of the Maritime Administration, vice David T. Matsuda, resigned.

Peter Joseph Kadzik,
of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Ronald H. Weich, resigned.

Tina S. Kaidanow,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism, with the rank and status of Ambassador at Large, vice Daniel Benjamin, resigned.

Marc A. Kastner,
of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Science, Department of Energy, vice William F. Brinkman.

Charles Norman Wiltse Keckler,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2016 (reappointment).

Richard A. Kennedy,
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority for a term expiring May 30, 2016, vice William Cobey, term expired.

R. Gil Kerlikowske,
of the District of Columbia, to be Commissioner of Customs, Department of Homeland Security, vice Alan D. Bersin, resigned.

Esther Puakela Kia'aina,
of Hawaii, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, vice Anthony Marion Babauta.

Leslie Berger Kiernan,
of Maryland, to be Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform.

Leslie Berger Kiernan,
of Maryland, to be Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador.

Frank G. Klotz,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, vice Thomas P. D'Agostino, resigned.

Kenneth J. Kopocis,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Peter Silva Silva, resigned.

Neil Gregory Kornze,
of Nevada, to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management, vice Robert V. Abbey, resigned.

Harry James Franklyn Korrell III,
of Washington, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2014 (reappointment).

Caroline Diane Krass,
of the District of Columbia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency, vice Stephen Woolman Preston, resigned.

Arun Madhavan Kumar,
of California, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service, vice Suresh Kumar, resigned.

Helen Meagher La Lime,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordi-

nary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Angola.

Nanci E. Langley,
of Hawaii, to be a Commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission for a term expiring November 22, 2018 (reappointment).

William A. LaPlante, Jr.,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, vice Sue C. Payton.

Michael Anderson Lawson,
of California, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

John Gerson Levi,
of Illinois, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2014 (reappointment).

John Gerson Levi,
of Illinois, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2017 (reappointment).

Patricia Nelson Limerick,
of Colorado, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2018, vice Robert S. Martin, term expired.

Vincent G. Logan,
of New York, to be Special Trustee, Office of Special Trustee for American Indians, Department of the Interior, vice Ross Owen Swimmer, resigned.

Mark E. Lopes,
of Arizona, to be U.S. Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank for a term of 3 years, vice Gustavo Arnavat, resigned.

Mark E. Lopes,
of Arizona, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2016, vice Hector E. Morales, term expired.

Shelly Colleen Lowe,
of Arizona, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2018, vice Jane M. Doggett, term expired.

Donald Lu,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Albania.

Heather L. MacDougall,
of Florida, to be a member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for a term expiring April 27, 2017, vice Horace A. Thompson, term expired.

Victor B. Maddox,
of Kentucky, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2016 (reappointment).

Tomasz P. Malinowski,
of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, vice Michael H. Posner, resigned.

Noah Bryson Mamet,
of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Argentine Republic.

L. Paige Marvel,
of Maryland, to be a Judge of the U.S. Tax Court for a term of 15 years (reappointment).

Timothy G. Massad,
of Connecticut, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring April 13, 2017, vice Gary Gensler, term expired.

Timothy G. Massad,
of Connecticut, to be Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, vice Gary Gensler.

Susan McCue,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 3 years, vice Kenneth Francis Hackett, term expired.

Terrell McSweeny,
of the District of Columbia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the unexpired term of 7 years from September 26, 2010, vice Jon D. Leibowitz, resigned.

Laurie I. Mikva,
of Illinois, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2016 (reappointment).

Vicki Miles-LaGrange,
of Oklahoma, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 2015, vice Roger L. Hunt, term expired.

Debra L. Miller,
of Kansas, to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board for a term expiring December 31, 2017, vice Francis Mulvey, term expired.

Ericka M. Miller,
of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, vice Eduardo M. Ochoa.

James C. Miller, III,
of Virginia, to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service for the term expiring December 8, 2017 (reappointment).

Martha L. Minow,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2014 (reappointment).

Martha L. Minow,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2017 (reappointment).

Theodore Reed Mitchell,
of California, to be Under Secretary of Education, vice Martha J. Kanter.

Joseph P. Mohorovic,
of Illinois, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of 7 years from October 27, 2012, vice Nancy Ann Nord, term expired.

Carlos Roberto Moreno,
of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Belize.

Luis G. Moreno,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Jamaica.

Jamie Michael Morin,
of Michigan, to be Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Department of Defense, vice Christine H. Fox, resigned.

Vivek Hallegere Murthy,
of Massachusetts, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, subject to qualifications therefor as provided by law and regulations, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service for a term of 4 years, vice, Regina M. Benjamin, resigned.

Mark Thomas Nethery,
of Kentucky, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2018, vice Eric D. Eberhard, term expired.

Brian A. Nichols,
of Rhode Island, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Coun-

selor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Peru.

Crystal Nix-Hines,
of California, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

Catherine Ann Novelli,
of Virginia, to be an Under Secretary of State (Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment), vice Robert D. Hormats, resigned.

Catherine Ann Novelli,
of Virginia, to be U.S. Alternate Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of 5 years; U.S. Alternate Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank for a term of 5 years, vice Robert D. Hormats, resigned.

Catherine Ann Novelli,
of Virginia, to be U.S. Alternate Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, vice Robert D. Hormats, resigned.

Katherine M. O'Regan,
of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, vice Raphael William Bostic.

Franklin M. Orr, Jr.,
of California, to be Under Secretary for Science, Department of Energy, vice Steven Elliot Koonin.

Carlos Pascual,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Energy Resources), vice John Stern Wolf.

Myrna Perez,
of Texas, to be a member of the Election Assistance Commission for a term expiring December 12, 2015, vice Rosemary E. Rodriguez, term expired.

Joseph Pius Pietrzyk,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2014 (reappointment).

Carolyn Hessler Radelet,
of Virginia, to be Director of the Peace Corps, vice Aaron S. Williams, resigned.

David Radzanowski,
of the District of Columbia, to be Chief Financial Officer, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, vice Elizabeth M. Robinson.

Sarah Bloom Raskin,
of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, vice Neal S. Wolin.

Eunice S. Reddick,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Niger.

Massie Ritsch,
of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Communications and Outreach, Department of Education, vice Peter Cunningham.

Charles Hammerman Rivkin,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs), vice Jose W. Fernandez, resigned.

Elizabeth M. Robinson,
of Washington, to be Under Secretary of Energy, vice Kristina M. Johnson, resigned.

Jo Ann Rooney,
of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary of the Navy, vice Robert O. Work, resigned.

Charles P. Rose,
of Illinois, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring May 26, 2019, vice Robert Boldrey, term expired.

Frank A. Rose,
of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Verification and Compliance), vice Rose Eilene Gottemoeller.

John Roth,
of Michigan, to be Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security, vice Richard L. Skinner, resigned.

Thomas Edgar Rothman,
of Maryland, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2016 (new position).

Yvette Roubideaux,
of Maryland, to be Director of the Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, for the term of 4 years (reappointment).

Adam M. Scheinman,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation, with the rank of Ambassador.

Rhonda K. Schmidtlein,
of Missouri, to be a member of the U.S. International Trade Commission for a term expiring December 16, 2021, vice Shara L. Aranoff, term expired.

Janice Marion Schneider,
of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, vice Wilma A. Lewis, resigned.

Eric T. Schultz,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Zambia.

Linda A. Schwartz,
of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Policy and Planning), vice Raul Perea-Henze, resigned.

Peter A. Selfridge,
of Minnesota, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service, vice Capricia Penavic Marshall, resigned.

Stefan M. Selig,
of New York, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, vice Francisco J. Sanchez, resigned.

Sarah Sewall,
of Massachusetts, to be an Under Secretary of State (Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights), vice Maria Otero, resigned.

James H. Shelton III,
of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of Education, vice Anthony W. Miller, resigned.

Robert A. Sherman,
of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Portuguese Republic.

Douglas Alan Silliman,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Kuwait.

Robert Michael Simon,
of Maryland, to be an Associate Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, vice Sherburne B. Abbott.

Christopher Smith,
of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Fossil Energy), vice Charles DeWitt McConnell, resigned.

Daniel Bennett Smith,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Intelligence and Research), vice Philip S. Goldberg.

Suzanne Eleanor Spaulding,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, vice Rand Beers.

Karen Clark Stanton,
of Michigan, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Richard Stengel,
of New York, to be Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, vice Tara D. Sonenshine.

Rhea Sun Suh,
of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, vice Thomas L. Strickland, resigned.

Kathryn D. Sullivan,
of Ohio, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, vice Jane Lubchenco, resigned.

Puneet Talwar,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs), vice Andrew J. Shapiro.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield,
an Assistant Secretary of State (African Affairs), to be a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation for the remainder of the term expiring September 27, 2015, vice Johnnie Carson.

Kathryn B. Thomson,
of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Transportation, vice Robert S. Rivkin, resigned.

Helen Tierney,
of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Constance B. Tobias,
of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals for a term of 6 years, vice James Philip Terry, term expired.

George James Tsunis,
of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Norway.

Anne J. Udall,
of Oregon, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2016 (reappointment).

Gloria Valencia-Weber,
of New Mexico, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2014 (reappointment).

Gloria Valencia-Weber,
of New Mexico, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2017 (reappointment).

Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer,
of Illinois, to be Chief Financial Officer, Environmental Protection Agency, vice Barbara J. Bennett, resigned.

David Weil,
of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, vice Paul DeCamp.

Kelly R. Welsh,
of Illinois, to be General Counsel of the Department of Commerce, vice Cameron F. Kerry.

Joseph William Westphal,
of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Kevin Whitaker,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Colombia.

Ellen Dudley Williams,
of Maryland, to be Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, Department of Energy, vice Arun Majumdar, resigned.

Roy K.J. Williams,
of Ohio, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, vice John R. Fernandez, resigned.

Robert A. Wood,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament.

Jessica Garfola Wright,
of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, vice Erin C. Conaton, resigned.

Portia Y. Wu,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor, vice Jane Oates.

Janet L. Yellen,
of California, to be U.S. Alternate Governor of the International Monetary Fund for a term of 5 years, vice Ben S. Bernanke, term expired.

Daniel W. Yohannes,
of Colorado, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador.

Michael Keith Yudin,
of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, vice Alexa E. Posny.

Submitted January 7

Paige Eve Alexander,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Mara E. Rudman.

Max Sieben Baucus,
of Montana, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China.

Sharon Y. Bowen,
of New York, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring April 13, 2018, vice Bartholomew Chilton, resigned.

John Charles Cruden,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Ignacia S. Moreno, resigned.

Janet Garvin McCabe,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Regina McCarthy, resigned.

J. Mark McWatters,
of Texas, to be a member of the National Credit Union Administration Board for a term expiring August 2, 2019, vice Michael E. Fryzel, term expired.

Leon Rodriguez,
of Maryland, to be Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, vice Alejandro N. Mayorkas, resigned.

Eric Rosenbach,
of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Paul N. Stockton, resigned.

David B. Shear,
of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Mark William Lippert, resigned.

Darci L. Vetter,
of Nebraska, to be Chief Agricultural Negotiator, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, vice Islam A. Siddiqui.

Submitted January 9

Heidi Neel Biggs,
of Oregon, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and

Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2017, vice Eric J. Tanenblatt, term expired.

Deborah L. Birx,
of Maryland, to be Ambassador at Large and Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally.

Michael W. Kempner,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2015, vice Michael Lynton, resigned.

Suzette M. Kimball,
of West Virginia, to be Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, vice Marcia K. McNutt, resigned.

Christopher P. Lu,
of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, vice Seth David Harris.

Westley Watende Omari Moore,
of Maryland, to be member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2016, vice Stan Z. Soloway, term expired.

Submitted January 13

Lael Brainard,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of 14 years from February 1, 2012, vice Elizabeth A. Duke, resigned.

Stanley Fischer,
of New York, to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of 4 years, vice Janet L. Yellen.

Stanley Fischer,
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of 14 years from February 1, 2006, vice Ben S. Bernanke.

Submitted January 16

Stephen R. Bough,
of Missouri, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Missouri, vice Fernando J. Gaitan, Jr., retiring.

Richard Franklin Boulware II,
of Nevada, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada, vice Philip M. Pro, retired.

Salvador Mendoza, Jr.,
of Washington, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington, vice Lonny R. Suko, retired.

Staci Michelle Yandle,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois, vice John Phil Gilbert, retiring.

Gustavo Velasquez Aguilar,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, vice John D. Trasvina, resigned.

Richard Christman,
of Kentucky, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2017 (reappointment).

Maria Conteras-Sweet,
of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration, vice Karen Gordon Mills, resigned.

Nina Hachigian,
of California, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Jerome H. Powell,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of 14 years from February 1, 2014 (reappointment).

Shamina Singh,
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2014, vice Alan D. Solomont, resigned.

Shamina Singh,
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2019 (reappointment).

Matthew H. Tueller,
of Utah, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Yemen.

Submitted January 30

Miranda A.A. Ballentine,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, vice Terry A. Yonkers, resigned.

Norman C. Bay,
of New Mexico, to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2018, vice Jon Wellinghoff, resigned.

L. Reginald Brothers, Jr.,
of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary for Science and Technology, Department of Homeland Security, vice Tara Jeanne O'Toole, resigned.

William P. Doyle,
of Pennsylvania, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2018. (reappointment).

Ann Elizabeth Dunkin,
of California, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Malcolm D. Jackson.

Manuel H. Ehrlich, Jr.,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for a term of 5 years, vice John S. Bresland, resigned.

Mileydi Guilarte,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Alternate Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank, vice Jan E. Boyer, resigned.

Suzan G. LeVine,
of Washington, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Swiss Confederation, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Michael J. McCord,
of Ohio, to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), vice Robert F. Hale.

Brian P. McKeon,
of New York, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, vice Kathleen H. Hicks, resigned.

Christine E. Wormuth,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, vice James N. Miller, Jr., resigned.

Withdrawn January 30

Leslie Berger Kiernan,
of Maryland, to be Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Leslie Berger Kiernan,
of Maryland, to be Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Na-

tions for U.N. Management and Reform, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Submitted February 6

Beth Bloom,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, vice Donald L. Graham, retired.

Paul G. Byron,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, vice James S. Moody, Jr., retiring.

Darrin P. Gayles,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, vice Patricia A. Seitz, retired.

Cheryl Ann Krause,
of New Jersey, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, vice Dolores Korman Sloviter, retired.

Carlos Eduardo Mendoza,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, vice John Antoon II, retired.

Submitted February 10

Cassandra Q. Butts,
of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Mark Green,
of the Wisconsin, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 2 years (reappointment).

Matthew T. McGuire,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of 2 years, vice Ian Hoddy Solomon, term expired.

Robert O. Work,
of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense, vice Ashton B. Carter, resigned.

Submitted February 12

Todd A. Batta,
of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, vice Brian T. Baenig, resigned.

Maria Cancian,
of Wisconsin, to be Assistant Secretary for Family Support, Department of Health and Human Services, vice Carmen R. Nazario.

R. Jane Chu,
of Missouri, to be Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts for a term of 4 years, vice Rocco Landesman, retired.

Julia Akins Clark,
of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of 5 years (reappointment).

Victoria Reggie Kennedy,
of Massachusetts, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2016, vice Carolyn L. Gallagher, term expired.

D. Nathan Sheets,
of Maryland, to be an Under Secretary of the Treasury, vice Lael Brainard, resigned.

Mark Sobel,
of Virginia, to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of 2 years, vice Margrethe Lundsager, resigning.

Francis Xavier Taylor,
of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security, vice Caryn A. Wagner, resigned.

Submitted February 24

Todd Sunhwae Kim,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of

Appeals for the term of 15 years, vice Kathryn A. Oberly, retired.

Submitted February 26

Robin L. Rosenberg,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, vice Adalberto Jose Jordan, elevated.

Submitted February 27

Lisa S. Disbrow,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, vice Jamie Michael Morin.

Robert W. Holleyman II,
of Louisiana, to be a Deputy U.S. Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, vice Demetrios J. Marantis, resigned.

Juan Carlos Iturregui,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring June 26, 2014, vice Thomas Joseph Dodd, term expired.

Juan Carlos Iturregui,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring June 26, 2020 (reappointment).

Roberta S. Jacobson,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2014, vice Adolfo A. Franco, term expired.

Roberta S. Jacobson,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2020 (reappointment).

Laura Junor,
of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, vice Jo Ann Rooney, resigned.

Karen Kornbluh,
of New York, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2016, vice Michael P. Meehan, term expired.

Annette Taddeo-Goldstein,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2018, vice John P. Salazar, term expired.

Submitted March 10

Nani A. Coloretti,
of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, vice Maurice A. Jones, resigned.

Estevan R. López,
of New Mexico, to be Commissioner of Reclamation, vice Michael L. Connor, resigned.

Erika Lizabeth Moritsugu,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, vice Peter A. Kovar, resigned.

Monica C. Regalbuto,
of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Environmental Management), vice Ines R. Triay, resigned.

Andrew H. Schapiro,
of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Czech Republic.

Withdrawn March 10

Nani A. Coloretti,
of California, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of the Treasury, vice Daniel M. Tangherlini, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Submitted March 11

Leslie Joyce Abrams,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Georgia, vice W. Louis Sands, retiring.

Submitted March 13

Judith M. Davenport,
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2020, vice David H. Pryor, term expired.

Bradford Raymond Huther,
of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development, vice Douglas A. Criscitello.

Deirdre M. Daly,
of Connecticut, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut for the term of 4 years, vice David B. Fein, resigned.

John W. deGravelles,
of Louisiana, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Louisiana, vice James J. Brady, retired.

James Walter Frazer Green,
of Louisiana, to be U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana for the term of 4 years, vice Donald J. Cazayoux, Jr., resigned.

Ronald Lee Miller,
of Kansas, to be U.S. Marshal for the District of Kansas for the term of 4 years, vice Walter Robert Bradley, retired.

Submitted March 31

Elliot F. Kaye,
of New York, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of 7 years from October 27, 2013, vice Inez Moore Tenenbaum, resigned.

Elliot F. Kaye,
of New York, to be Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, vice Inez Moore Tenenbaum, resigned.

Alfonso E. Lenhardt,
of New York, to be Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Donald Kenneth Steinberg.

Linda Struyk Millsaps,
of North Carolina, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2018, vice Paul Jones, term expired.

Dean A. Reuter,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring September 14, 2016, vice Julie Fisher Cummings, term expired.

Elizabeth Sembler,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2020 (reappointment).

Submitted April 3

André Birotte, Jr.,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice Gary Allen Feess, retired.

Randolph D. Moss,
Maryland, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice Robert Leon Wilkins, elevated.

Submitted April 7

Steven H. Cohen,
of Illinois, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 2019 (reappointment).

Thomas P. Kelly III,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Djibouti.

Jane Toshiko Nishida,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Michelle DePass, resigned.

Sunil Sabharwal,
of California, to be U.S. Alternate Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of 2 years, vice Douglas A. Rediker, resigned.

Gordon O. Tanner,
of Alabama, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Air Force, vice Charles A. Blanchard, resigned.

Submitted April 10

Nancy B. Firestone,
of Virginia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims for a term of 15 years (reappointment).

Lydia Kay Griggsby,
of Maryland, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims for a term of 15 years, vice Francis M. Allegra, term expired.

Thomas L. Halkowski,
of Pennsylvania, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims for a term of 15 years, vice Lynn Jeanne Bush, term expired.

William D. Adams,
of Maine, to be Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities for a term of 4 years, vice James A. Leach, resigned.

Robert M. Speer,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army, vice Mary Sally Matiella, resigned.

Jonathan Nicholas Stivers,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Nisha Desai Biswal, resigned.

Ramin Toloui,
of Iowa, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury, vice Charles Collyns, resigned.

Alice G. Wells,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Submitted April 11

Sylvia Mathews Burwell,
of West Virginia, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, vice Kathleen Sebelius.

Submitted May 1

Pamela Pepper,
of Wisconsin, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, vice Charles N. Clevert, Jr., retired.

Submitted May 5

Anthony G. Collins,
of New York, to be a member of the Advisory Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, vice William L. Wilson.

J. Christopher Giancarlo,
of New Jersey, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring April 13, 2019 (reappointment).

Robert M. Gordon,
of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Department of Education, vice Carmel Martin, resigned.

George Albert Krol,
of New Jersey, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Cheryl A. LaFleur,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2019 (reappointment).

Mark William Lippert,
of Ohio, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Korea.

David Arthur Mader,
of Virginia, to be Controller, Office of Federal Financial Management, Office of Management and Budget, vice Daniel I. Werfel, resigned.

John Maeda,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2016 (new position).

Jeffrey A. Murawsky,
of Illinois, to be Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs, vice Robert A. Petzel.

James D. Nealon,
of New Hampshire, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Honduras.

Marcia Denise Occomy,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Director of the African Development Bank for a term of 5 years, vice Walter Crawford Jones, resigned.

Dana Shell Smith,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Qatar.

Gentry O. Smith,
of North Carolina, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service, vice Eric J. Boswell, resigned.

Debra S. Wada,
of Hawaii, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army, vice Thomas R. Lamont, resigned.

Submitted May 5

Pamela Harris,
of Maryland, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fourth Circuit, vice Andre M. Davis, retired.

Brenda K. Sannes,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of New York, vice Norman A. Mordue, retired.

Submitted May 12

Robert Stephen Beecroft,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Stuart E. Jones,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Iraq.

Lisa Afua Serwah Mensah,
of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development, vice Dallas P. Tonsager, resigned.

Withdrawn May 12

Tommy Port Beaudreau,
of Alaska, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, vice Rhea S. Suh, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Submitted May 15

Robert S. Adler,
of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of 7 years from October 27, 2014 (reappointment).

Victor M. Mendez,
of Arizona, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation, vice John D. Porcari, resigned.

Theodore G. Osius III,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Joan A. Polaschik,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Peter M. Rogoff,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy, vice Polly Ellen Trottenberg, resigned.

Submitted May 20

Geoffrey W. Crawford,
of Vermont, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Vermont, vice William K. Sessions, III, retiring.

Submitted May 21

Armando Ormar Bonilla,
of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims for a term of 15 years, vice Edward J. Damich, term expired.

Patricia M. McCarthy,
of Maryland, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims for a term of 15 years, vice Emily Clark Hewitt, retired.

Jeri Kaylene Somers,
of Maryland, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims for a term of 15 years, vice George W. Miller, retired.

Submitted May 22

Bruce H. Andrews,
of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce, vice Rebecca M. Blank, resigned.

Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat,
of New Jersey, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Marcus Dwayne Jadotte,
of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, vice Nicole Yvette Lamb-Hale, resigned.

James D. Pettit,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Moldova.

Laura S. Wertheimer,
of the District of Columbia, to be Inspector General of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, vice Steve A. Linick, resigned.

Submitted June 2

Julián Castro,
of Texas, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, vice Shaun L.S. Donovan.

Shaun L.S. Donovan,
of New York, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, vice Sylvia Mathews Burwell.

Submitted June 4

John R. Bass,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Turkey.

Leslie Ann Bassett,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Paraguay.

Allan P. Mustard,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Turkmenistan.

Todd D. Robinson,
of New Jersey, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Guatemala.

Submitted June 5

Kevin F. O'Malley,
of Missouri, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland.

Jessie Hill Roberson,
of Alabama, to be a member of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board for a term expiring October 18, 2018 (reappointment).

Daniel J. Santos,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board for a term expiring October 18, 2017, vice Joseph F. Bader, term expired.

Submitted June 9

Jane D. Hartley,
of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the French Republic.

Cary Douglas Pugh,
of Virginia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Tax Court for a term of 15 years, vice Robert Allen Wherry, Jr., retired.

Withdrawn June 9

Jeffrey A. Murawsky,
of Illinois, to be Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs, vice Robert A. Petzel, which was sent to the Senate on May 5, 2014.

Submitted June 19

Arthur Lee Bentley III,
of Florida, to be U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida for the term of 4 years, vice Robert E. O'Neill, resigned.

David J. Hale,
of Kentucky, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky, vice Charles R. Simpson III, retired.

David Rivera,
of Tennessee, to be U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee for the term of 4 years, vice Jerry E. Martin, resigned.

Gregory N. Stivers,
of Kentucky, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky, vice Thomas B. Russell, retired.

Submitted June 23

Carolyn Watts Colvin,
of Maryland, to be Commissioner of Social Security for the term expiring January 19, 2019, vice Michael J. Astrue, resigned.

Submitted June 26

Madeline Cox Arleo,
of New Jersey, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey, vice Dennis M. Cavanaugh, retired.

Amos L. Mazzant, III,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas, vice T. John Ward, retired.

Robert Lee Pitman,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Texas, vice W. Royal Furgeson, Jr., retired.

Robert William Schroeder III,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas, vice David Folsom, retired.

Christopher A. Hart,
of Colorado, to be Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term of 2 years, vice Deborah A.P. Hersman, resigned.

John W. Leslie, Jr.,
of Connecticut, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation for a term expiring September 22, 2019 (reappointment).

Appendix C—Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released January 1

Statement by National Economic Council Director Eugene B. Sperling on the need for congressional action to extend emergency unemployment benefits

Released January 3

Fact sheet: Strengthening the Federal Background Check System To Keep Guns Out of Potentially Dangerous Hands

Released January 5

Readout of Deputy National Security Adviser Antony J. Blinken's telephone conversation with National Security Adviser Faleh al-Fayyad of Iraq

Released January 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and National Economic Council Director Eugene B. Sperling

Released January 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released January 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released January 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: Obama Administration Launches Quadrennial Energy Review

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the situation in South Sudan

Fact sheet: President Obama's Promise Zones Initiative

Released January 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in December

Released January 12

Statement from the Office of the Vice President: President Obama Announces Presidential Delegation to the State of Israel To Attend the State Funeral of Former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

Released January 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released January 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the decision by Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif-Khonsari of Iran to place a wreath at the grave of former Lebanese Hizballah leader Imad Mugniyah

Released January 15

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Announces New Public-Private Manufacturing Innovation Institute

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 106

Fact sheet: U.S. Conventional Arms Transfer Policy

Fact sheet: The President and First Lady's Call to Action on College Opportunity

Released January 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: Summary of Technical Understandings Related to the Implementation of the Joint Plan of Action on the Islamic Republic of Iran's Nuclear Program

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Special Tribunal for Lebanon

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 667 and S. 1614

Released January 17

Transcript of a background conference call by senior administration officials on the administration's review of U.S. signals intelligence and electronic surveillance programs

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3547

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with National Security Adviser Shotaro Yachi of Japan at the White House

Fact sheet: Review of U.S. Signals Intelligence

Advance text of the President's remarks on U.S. signals intelligence and electronic surveillance programs

Released January 18

Statement by the Press Secretary on the attack on a restaurant in Kabul, Afghanistan

Released January 19

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the situation in Ukraine

Released January 20

Statement by the Press Secretary: President and First Lady, Vice President Biden, Cabinet Secretaries, Senior Administration Officials Honor Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service

Statement by the Press Secretary on the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action regarding Iran's nuclear program

Released January 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text: The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration

Released January 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Readout of administration officials' panel discussion with the U.S. Conference of Mayors

Released January 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3527 and S. 230

Released January 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Announces First Round of Guests in First Lady's Box—State of the Union Address

Released January 28

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Announces Additional Guests in the First Lady's Box—State of the Union Address

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Announces Additional Guests in the First Lady's Box—State of the Union Address

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All—Rewarding Hard Work

Fact sheet: The State of the Union Fact Sheet: Opportunity for All

Excerpts of the President's State of the Union Address

Advance text of the President's State of the Union Address

Released January 29

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with National Security and Foreign Affairs Adviser Sartaj Aziz of Pakistan

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: Securing a Dignified Retirement for All Americans

Released January 30

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on freedom of the press in China

Text of a White House blog post by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman: Advance Estimate of GDP for the Fourth Quarter of 2013

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado of Brazil

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: Empowering All Americans With the Skills Needed for In-Demand Jobs

Released January 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: The President's Call to Action To Give the Long-Term Unemployed a Fair Shot

Released February 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released February 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Congressional Budget Office report on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All—Answering the President's Call To Enrich American Education Through ConnectED

Released February 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the U.S.-Iraq Energy Joint Coordination Committee meeting

Released February 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on Senate action to block legislation extending unemployment insurance benefits

Released February 7

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack

Statement by the Press Secretary: Stat Sheet: Opportunity for All—CEA Highlights of Recent Farm Sector and Rural Economy Performance

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2642

Text: Highlights of Recent Farm Sector and Rural Economy Performance

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in January

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All : Establishing a New "Made in Rural America" Export and Investment Initiative

Released February 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of a teleconference background briefing by senior administration officials on the state visit of President François Hollande of France

Text of an op-ed by President Obama and President François Hollande of France for the Washington Post and Le Monde: France and the U.S. Enjoy a Renewed Alliance

Released February 11

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Cyprus

Statement by the Press Secretary on House of Representatives passage of legislation increasing the public debt limit

Text: National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking

Fact sheet: United States-France Economic and Commercial Partnership

Fact sheet: U.S.-France Security Cooperation

Fact sheet: U.S. Cooperation With France on Protecting the Environment, Building a Clean Energy Economy, and Addressing Climate Change

Fact sheet: Student and Youth Exchange Programs Between the United States and France

Fact sheet: U.S.-France Cooperation on Science and Technology

Fact sheet: National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking & Commercial Ban on Trade in Elephant Ivory

Released February 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of a teleconference background briefing by senior administration officials on the release of the "Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity" by the National Institute of Standards and Technology

Statement by the Press Secretary: Launch of the Cybersecurity Framework

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2860 and S. 1901

Text: Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: Rewarding Hard Work

Released February 13

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice and Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's meeting with Minister of Interior Prince Muhammad bin Nayif bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia

Text: U.S. Drought Monitor: California

Fact sheet: President Obama Leading Administration-wide Drought Response (embargoed until February 14)

Released February 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

Transcript of a press briefing by senior administration officials on the visit of King Abdullah II of Jordan

Transcript of a teleconference background briefing by senior administration officials on the President's upcoming travel to Mexico

Transcript of a background briefing by a senior administration official on the President's meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan

Released February 15

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 25 and S. 540

Released February 17

Text of a White House blog post by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman: The Fifth Anniversary of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Released February 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of an on-the-record teleconference briefing by Council of Economic Advisers

Chairman Jason L. Furman and Council of Economic Advisers Member Betsey A. Stevenson on the Congressional Budget Office report on the minimum wage

Text: Improving the Fuel Efficiency of American Trucks—Bolstering Energy Security, Cutting Carbon Pollution, Saving Money, and Supporting Manufacturing Innovation

Text of a White House blog post by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman and Council of Economic Advisers Member Betsey A. Stevenson: Congressional Budget Office Report Finds Minimum Wage Lifts Wages for 16.5 Million Workers

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: Improving the Fuel Efficiency of American Trucks—Bolstering Energy Security, Cutting Carbon Pollution, Saving Money and Supporting Manufacturing Innovation

Released February 19

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Fact sheet: President Obama To Sign Executive Order on Streamlining the Export/Import Process for America's Businesses

Fact sheet: Key Deliverables for the 2014 North American Leaders Summit

Released February 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Fact sheet: Executive Actions: Answering the President's Call To Strengthen Our Patent System and Foster Innovation

Released February 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S.J. Res. 28 and S.J. Res. 29

Released February 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S.J. Res. 28 and S.J. Res. 29

Released February 22

Statement by the Press Secretary on the swearing-in of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Released February 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's signing of legislation criminalizing homosexuality

Released February 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Announces Two New Public-Private Manufacturing Innovation Institutes and Launches the First of Four New Manufacturing Innovation Institute Competitions

Released February 26

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Secretary of Transportation Anthony R. Foxx

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Fact sheet: President Obama Lays Out Vision for 21st Century Transportation Infrastructure

Released February 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text of a press release from Adobe Systems Inc.: Adobe Commits Over $300 Million in Software and Teacher Training to President Obama's ConnectED Initiative (embargoed until February 28)

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: President Obama Launches My Brother's Keeper Initiative To Build Ladders of Opportunity for Boys and Young Men of Color

Released February 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama To Host First-Ever White House Film Festival: Announces $400 Million in New Private Sector Commitments Toward ConnectED Goal

Text of a press release from Prezi Inc.: Prezi Becomes a Technology Partner in the White House ConnectED Initiative

Released March 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Office of Management and Budget Director Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman, Domestic Policy Council Director Cecilia Muñoz, National Economic Council Director Eugene B. Sperling, and Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Report: The President's Proposal To Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit

Fact sheet: International Support for Ukraine

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: Middle Class Tax Cuts in the President's FY 2015 Budget

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: The President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget

Released March 5

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's travel to Israel

Released March 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of a teleconference background briefing by senior administration officials on the Executive order blocking property of certain persons contributing to the situation in Ukraine

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2431

Released March 7

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a teleconference background briefing by senior administration officials on Vice President Joe Biden and Dr. Jill T. Biden's trip to Chile and the Dominican Republic

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on Deputy National Security Adviser Antony J. Blinken's meeting with United Nations Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Joint Mission in Syria Special Coordinator Sigrid A.M. Kaag

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in February

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's travel to the United Arab Emirates and Djibouti

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: Promoting College Opportunity and Graduation

Released March 9

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's travel to the United Arab Emirates and Djibouti

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and

Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's travel to Turkey, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia

Released March 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text of a White House blog post by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman: The 2014 *Economic Report of the President*

Fact sheet: The United States and Chile

Released March 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Establishes Point Arena-Stornetta Unit of California Coastal National Monument

Statement by the Press Secretary on the third anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake

Text of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice at the Department of State's Global Chiefs of Mission Conference

Released March 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Council of Economic Advisers member Betsey A. Stevenson

Released March 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on Senate action on legislation to extend emergency unemployment benefits

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 23

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: Rewarding Hard Work by Strengthening Overtime Protections

Released March 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

Text of a press release from the Department of Education: Obama Administration Takes Action To Protect Americans From Predatory, Poor-Performing Career Colleges

Fact sheet: U.S. Support for Peace and Prosperity in Northern Ireland

Released March 16

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Released March 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of a teleconference background briefing by senior administration officials on the situation in Ukraine

Fact sheet: Ukraine-Related Sanctions

Announcement: White House To Host Event Highlighting Efforts To Boost Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience

Released March 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released March 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on U.S. admittance as an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative candidate country

Fact sheet: The President's Climate Data Initiative: Empowering America's Communities To Prepare for the Effects of Climate Change

Fact sheet: The Economic Case for Increasing the Minimum Wage: State by State Impact

Released March 20

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of a teleconference background briefing by senior administration officials on the situation in Ukraine

Fact sheet: Expanding Economic Opportunity for Women and Working Families

Released March 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Turkish Government's restriction of access to Twitter

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2650, H.R. 3370, H.R. 4076, and S.J. Res. 32

Released March 23

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the death of former Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez González of Spain

Released March 24

Transcript of a videoconference press briefing by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Transcript of a background press briefing by a senior administration official on the Group of Seven (G–7) summit meeting in The Hague, Netherlands

Fact sheet: Advancing Global Nuclear Security

Fact sheet: Cooperation at Japan's Fast Critical Assembly

Fact sheet: United States-Japan Nuclear Security Working Group

Fact sheet: Belgium Highly Enriched Uranium and Plutonium Removals

Fact sheet: Italy Highly Enriched Uranium and Plutonium Removals

Released March 25

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Transcript of a press gaggle by senior administration officials

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Report: Race to the Top Setting the Pace for Gains Across the Education System

Statement by the Press Secretary on the New Hampshire legislature's passage of legislation to expand Medicaid coverage under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3771

White House and Department of Education report: Setting the Pace: Expanding Opportunity for America's Students Under Race to the Top

Fact sheet: U.S.-Kazakhstan Cooperative Activities in Nuclear Security

Fact sheet: Enhancing the Security of the Maritime Supply Chain Gift Basket

Fact sheet: U.S. Counter Nuclear Smuggling Activities

Released March 26

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by the Press Secretary: New White House Report: The Impact of Raising the Minimum Wage on Women and the Importance of Ensuring a Robust Tipped Minimum Wage

White House report: The Impact of Raising the Minimum Wage on Women and the Importance of Ensuring a Robust Tipped Minimum Wage

Fact sheet: Bilateral Relations Between the United States and Belgium

Fact sheet: U.S.-EU Cooperation

Fact sheet: U.S.-EU Economic Ties That Bind

Fact sheet: U.S.-EU Cooperation on Common Security and Defense Policy

Fact sheet: U.S.-EU Counterterrorism Cooperation

Fact sheet: U.S. Efforts in Support of NATO Allies and Partners

Fact sheet: U.S.-EU Cyber Cooperation

Released March 27

Transcript of a background teleconference call by senior administration officials on the National Security Agency's section 215 bulk telephony metadata program

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the U.N. Human Rights Council's passage of a resolution to promote reconciliation, accountability, and human rights in Sri Lanka

Fact sheet: The Administration's Proposal for Ending the Section 215 Bulk Telephony Metadata Program

Excerpts of the President's press conference remarks on his meeting with Pope Francis

Released March 28

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Transcript of a press briefing by senior administration officials on the President's meeting with King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia

Statement by the Press Secretary on the selection of former Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg to be Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Text: Climate Action Plan: Strategy To Reduce Methane Emissions

Fact sheet: Climate Action Plan—Strategy To Cut Methane Emissions

Fact sheet: United States-Saudi Arabia Bilateral Relationship

Released March 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released April 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the House Republican budget proposal

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4302

Released April 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on action by the New York State legislature to expand access to early childhood education

Released April 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in South Sudan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4152 and S. 2183

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2019

Released April 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in South Sudan (corrected; dated April 3)

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in February

Fact sheet: The President's Framework for Investing in Tunisia

Released April 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Announces *America's PrepareAthon!*: First National Day of Action, April 30

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4275 and S. 1557

Fact sheet: Youth CareerConnect

Fact sheet: Strengthening Entrepreneurship at Home and Abroad

Fact sheet: Expanding Opportunity for All: Ensuring Equal Pay for Women and Promoting the Women's Economic Agenda

Released April 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Fact sheet: Expanding Opportunity for All: Ensuring Equal Pay for Women and Promoting the Women's Economic Agenda

Released April 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released April 10

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on House of Representatives action on Federal budget legislation

Released April 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text of a White House blog post by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney: President Obama and Vice President Biden's 2013 Tax Returns

Released April 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's meeting with Minister of Finance Sakhir Ahmad Abbas al-Wajih and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Muhammad al-Saadi of Yemen

Released April 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Grants Commutation

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 404

Released April 16

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Fact sheet: American Job Training Investments: Skills and Jobs To Build a Stronger Middle Class

Advance text of remarks by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum in Cambridge, MA

Released April 17

Fact sheet: Building on Progress—Supporting Solar Deployment and Jobs

Fact sheet: Affordable Care Act by the Numbers

Released April 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney, Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, and National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 2195

Released April 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text of a press release from the Council on Environmental Quality: Obama Administration Officials To Celebrate Earth Day 2014

Released April 22

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in South Sudan

Released April 24

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the deaths of three U.S. health care workers in an attack in Kabul, Afghanistan

Released April 25

Transcript of a background press briefing by a senior administration official on Japan-U.S. trade negotiations

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Text of a joint fact sheet: The United States-Republic of Korea Alliance: A Global Partnership

Fact sheet: U.S.-Japan Global and Regional Cooperation

Fact sheet: U.S.-Japan Bilateral Cooperation

Fact sheet: Taking Action To Improve Teacher Preparation

Released April 26

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Attends Roundtable With Korean Business Executives To Encourage Investment in United States

Released April 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes and National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs Evan S. Medeiros

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Congratulates American Companies on Completing Commercial Agreements

Fact sheet: The President's Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative

Released April 28

Transcript of a background conference call by senior administration officials on economic sanctions against Russia in response to the situation in Ukraine

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Ukraine

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Egyptian Government's use of mass trials and sentencing

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Malaysian opposition leaders Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Lim Guan Eng, and Mustafa Ali

Fact sheet: United States-Philippines Bilateral Relations

Fact sheet: U.S.-Philippines Partnership for Growth

Released April 29

Fact sheet: Not Alone—Protecting Students From Sexual Assault

Released April 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the advance estimate of GDP for the first quarter of 2014

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Nabil Fahmy of Egypt

Released May 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Fact sheet: Big Data and Privacy Working Group Review

Released May 2

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in April

Fact sheet: The United States and Germany—Leading Together

Released May 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Counselor to the President John D. Podesta

Fact sheet: Marking the Administration's Progress on Mental Health

Released May 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's travel to Israel

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Vice President and High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton of the European Union

Text of a U.S. Global Change Research Program report: Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment

Fact sheet: What Climate Change Means for Regions Across America and Major Sectors of the Economy—The U.S. National Climate Assessment

Released May 7

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's notification of Congress of his intention to withdraw Generalized System of Preferences benefits from Russia

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with President Shimon Peres of Israel

Released May 8

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Readout of U.S.-Israel Consultative Group meetings

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority

Released May 8

Text of a White House progress report: Advancing Toward a Clean Energy Future

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces Commitments and Executive Actions To Advance Solar Deployment and Energy Efficiency

Released May 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 994

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the South Sudan peace agreement

Text of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice at Palmachim Air Force Base, Israel

Released May 10

Transcript of a weekly address by First Lady Michelle Obama (dated May 9; embargoed until May 10)

Released May 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Secretary of Transportation Anthony R. Foxx

Text of a White House blog post by Office of Digital Strategy Director of Online Content Lindsay Holst: A Numbers-Based Case for Why It's Time To Act on Infrastructure

Text of a White House report: The Economic Importance of Investing in Our Infrastructure

Fact sheet: The United States and Uruguay—A Growing Bilateral Relationship

Released May 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in the Central African Republic

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces President Ahmad al-Jarba

Released May 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the coal mine accident in Soma, Turkey

Fact sheet: Building a 21st-Century Infrastructure: Modernizing Infrastructure Permitting

Released May 15

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on Senate action on housing finance reform legislation

Statement by the Press Secretary on Federal Communications Commission adoption of revised mobile spectrum holdings policies

Text of a White House blog post by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney: The President and Vice President's 2013 Financial Disclosure Forms

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the sentencing of Mariam Yahya Ibrahim Ishag in Sudan

Released May 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the resignation of Department of Veterans Affairs Under Secretary for Health Robert A. Petzel

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4120 and H.R. 4192

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the terrorist attacks in Nairobi, Kenya

Released May 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on additional humanitarian assistance for South Sudan

Released May 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3627

White House and Department of Commerce report: Winning Business Investment in the United States

Fact sheet: On White House Roundtable on Investing in America

Released May 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Designates Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument

Statement by the Press Secretary on a proposed House of Representatives amendment authorizing the closure of the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station

Released May 22

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the terrorist attack in Urumqi, China

White House report: Increasing Tourism To Spur Economic Growth: Progress on the President's National Travel and Tourism Strategy (dated May 21; embargoed until May 22)

Text of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs Global Food Security Symposium

Text of a U.S. Agency for International Development fact sheet: U.S. Government Initiative Reduces Hunger and Poverty for Millions

Text of a U.S. Agency for International Development press release: USAID Pledges To Improve Nutrition for Millions of Children and Mothers With New Approach

Fact sheet: President Obama Visits Cooperstown To Highlight Travel and Tourism That Is Growing our Economy and Creating Jobs (dated May 21; embargoed until May 22)

Released May 23

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 685 and H.R. 1209

Released May 24

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 862

Released May 25

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Released May 26

Transcript of a background briefing by a senior administration official on the President's telephone conversation with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan

Statement by the Press Secretary on the swearing-in of Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India

Released May 27

Transcript of a background teleconference briefing by senior administration officials on Afghanistan

Text: Background on the Exhibits, Students, and Competitions at the White House Science Fair

Fact sheet: President Obama To Host White House Science Fair

Fact sheet: Bringing the U.S. War in Afghanistan to a Responsible End

Released May 28

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of a background teleconference call by a senior administration official on the President's commencement address at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY

Fact sheet: The Administration's Fiscal Year 2015 Overseas Contingency Operations Request

Fact sheet: Harnessing the Power of Data for a Clean, Secure, and Reliable Energy Future

Fact sheet: Obama Administration Designates the First 12 Manufacturing Communities Through the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership To Spur Investment and Create Jobs

Advance text of the President's commencement address at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY

Released May 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Releases Report on the Administration's All-of-the-Above Energy Strategy as a Path to Sustainable Economic Growth

White House report: The All-of-the-Above Energy Strategy as a Path to Sustainable Economic Growth

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the second estimate of GDP for the first quarter of 2014

Fact sheet: President Obama Applauds Commitments To Address Sports-Related Concussions in Young People

Released May 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Principal Dep-

uty Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and remarks by the President

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes on the President's upcoming travel to Poland, Belgium, and France

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 309

Text: My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report to the President

Text of an Environmental Protection Agency press release: Monday: EPA Administrator To Make Clean Air Act Announcement as Part of the President's Climate Action Plan

Fact sheet: Opportunity for All: My Brother's Keeper Blueprint for Action

Released June 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text of a press release from the Environmental Protection Agency: EPA Proposes First Guidelines To Cut Carbon Pollution From Existing Power Plants

Released June 3

Fact sheet: The United States and Poland: Strong and United

Fact sheet: European Reassurance Initiative and Other U.S. Efforts in Support of NATO Allies and Partners

Fact sheet: The United States and Central and Eastern Europe: Enduring Cooperation

Released June 4

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Presidential election in Egypt

Statement by the Press Secretary on the 25th anniversary of Tiananmen Square

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Presidential determination pursuant to section 1245(d)(4)(B) and (C) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012

Fact sheet: U.S. Security Assistance to Ukraine

Released June 5

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Transcript of remarks by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Jill T. Biden at a White House roundtable discussion on college affordability and student loans

Text of an op-ed by President Obama for Indian Country Today: On My Upcoming Trip to Indian Country

Fact sheet: The 2014 G–7 Summit in Brussels

Released June 6

Statement by the Press Secretary on a White House report on the health impacts of climate change on Americans

White House report: The Health Impacts of Climate Change on Americans

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in May

Fact sheet: Overview of U.S. Contributions to Peace and Security in Europe Since WWII

Fact sheet: Normandy Landings

Released June 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 724, H.R. 1036, H.R. 1228, H.R. 1451, H.R. 2391, H.R. 2939, H.R. 3060, H.R. 3658, H.R. 4032, H.R. 4488, and S. 611

Fact sheet: Making Student Loans More Affordable

Fact sheet: Supporting Western Governors as They Deal With Wildfire, Drought, and Other Climate Impacts

Released June 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: Report: Taking Action—Higher Education and Student Debt

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1726 and H.R. 3080

White House report: Taking Action: Higher Education and Student Debt

Released June 11

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a readout by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest of White House Counsel W. Neil Eggleston's briefing to White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough on recommendations to prevent the inadvertent release of sensitive information during the President's international travel

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Iraq

Advance text of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's keynote address at the annual conference of the Center for a New American Security: The Strength of American Leadership, the Power of Collective Action

Released June 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: Release of the President's Medical Exam

Text of a memorandum from Physician to the President and White House Medical Unit Director Ronny L. Jackson to Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney: The President's Periodic Physical Exam

Fact sheet: The United States and Australia: An Alliance for the Future

Fact sheet: Strengthening Tribal Communities Through Education and Economic Development

Released June 13

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released June 14

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Presidential election in Afghanistan

Fact sheet: National Disaster Resilience Competition

Released June 16

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's War Powers Resolution report notifying Congress of the deployment of U.S. military personnel to Iraq

Released June 17

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

White House report: Making in America: U.S. Manufacturing Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Text of an Office of Science and Technology Policy report: The Challenge of Ocean Acidification

Text of a National Science and Technology Council report: National Strategic Plan for Federal Aquaculture Research (2014–2019)

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Pen and Phone Actions To Spur Innovation and Entrepreneurship To Revitalize American Manufacturing

Fact sheet: Leading at Home and Internationally To Protect Our Ocean and Coasts

Released June 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text of a report from the Manufacturing Alliance of Communities: Maker Mayors Action Report

Fact sheet: President Obama To Host First-Ever White House Maker Faire

Released June 19

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the U.S. response to the Ugandan Government's enactment of legislation criminalizing homosexuality

Released June 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by Domestic Policy Council Director Cecilia Muñoz, Department of Homeland Security Deputy Director Alejandro N. Mayorkas, and National Security Council Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs Ricardo Zuñiga on efforts to enhance immigration enforcement on the Southwest border

Transcript of a background teleconference call by senior administration officials on the situation in Iraq

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Releases the United States Counter Piracy and Maritime Security Action Plan

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Report: Nine Facts About American Families and Work

Text: United States Counter Piracy and Maritime Security Action Plan

Text of an op-ed by President Obama for Military Times: Obama: Post-9/11 GI Bill Keeps Promise to Newest Vets

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: Nine Facts About American Families and Work

Fact sheet: The Economic Challenge Posed by Declining Pollinator Populations

Fact sheet: The United States and New Zealand: Forward Progress

Released June 21

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: The Economics of Paid and Unpaid Leave

Released June 22

Text of the agenda for the White House Summit on Working Families

Fact sheet: The White House Summit on Working Families

Released June 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the conviction of journalists in Egypt

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: Work-Life Balance and the Economics of Workplace Flexibility

Text of an op-ed by President Obama for the Huffington Post: Family-Friendly Workplace Policies Are Not Frills—They're Basic Needs

Released June 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice at the White House Forum on Global LGBT Human Rights

Fact sheet: Advancing the Human Rights of LGBT Persons Globally

Released June 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: Progress Report: President Obama's Climate Action Plan

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the third estimate of GDP for the first quarter of 2014

White House report: President Obama's Climate Action Plan Progress Report

Readout of meetings between senior administration officials and business leaders on climate change

Released June 26

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Massachusetts Government's enactment of legislation to raise the minimum wage

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the murder of human rights activist Salwa Bugaighis in Benghazi, Libya

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore

Statement by National Security Council spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the administration's Fiscal Year 2015 Overseas Contingency Operations budget request to Congress

Text of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice at a dinner honoring President Shimon Peres of Israel at the Israeli Embassy on June 25

Fact sheet: The Administration's Fiscal Year 2015 Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) Request

Released June 27

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on U.S. antipersonnel landmine policy

Text of a summary of findings presented to the President by Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Robert L. Nabors II following a review of "Veterans Health Administration: Issues Impacting Access to Timely Care at VA Medical Facilities"

Fact sheet: Changes to U.S. Anti-Personnel Landmine Policy

Released June 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on collective bargaining by public employees

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 316, S. 1044, S. 1254, and S. 2086

Fact sheet: The United States and Chile—A Strategic Partnership

Appendix D—Presidential Documents Published in the *Federal Register*

This appendix lists Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the Federal Register. *The texts of the documents are printed in the* Federal Register *(F.R.) at the citations listed below. The documents are also printed in title 3 of the* Code of Federal Regulations *and in the Compilation of Presidential Documents.*

PROCLAMATIONS

Proc. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
9076	Jan. 15	Religious Freedom Day, 2014	3477
9077	Jan. 15	Reserving Certain Submerged Lands in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	3479
9078	Jan. 16	Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, 2014	3719, 4265
9079	Jan. 31	American Heart Month, 2014	6795
9080	Jan. 31	National African American History Month, 2014	6797
9081	Jan. 31	National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, 2014	6799
9082	Feb. 10	20th Anniversary of Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice	8821
9083	Feb. 28	American Red Cross Month, 2014	12927
9084	Feb. 28	Irish-American Heritage Month, 2014	12929
9085	Feb. 28	National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, 2014	12931
9086	Feb. 28	National Consumer Protection Week, 2014	12933
9087	Feb. 28	Read Across America Day, 2014	12935
9088	Mar. 1	Women's History Month, 2014	13187
9089	Mar. 11	Boundary Enlargement of the California Coastal National Monument	14603
9090	Mar. 14	National Poison Prevention Week, 2014	15631
9091	Mar. 24	Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2014	17385
9092	Mar. 28	César Chavez Day, 2014	18763
9093	Mar. 31	National Cancer Control Month, 2014	18975
9094	Mar. 31	National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2014	18977
9095	Mar. 31	National Donate Life Month, 2014	18979
9096	Mar. 31	National Financial Capability Month, 2014	18981
9097	Mar. 31	National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, 2014	18983
9098	Apr. 1	World Autism Awareness Day, 2014	18985
9099	Apr. 4	National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 2014	19799

PROCLAMATIONS (Continued)

Proc. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
9100	Apr. 4	National Volunteer Week, 2014	19801
9101	Apr. 7	National Equal Pay Day, 2014	20089
9102	Apr. 8	National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2014	20747
9103	Apr. 10	Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2014	21119
9104	Apr. 11	Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 2014	21579
9105	Apr. 18	National Park Week, 2014	22589
9106	Apr. 21	Earth Day, 2014	22853
9107	Apr. 25	Workers Memorial Day, 2014	24525
9108	Apr. 30	Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, 2014	25641
9109	Apr. 30	Jewish American Heritage Month, 2014	25643
9110	Apr. 30	National Building Safety Month, 2014	25645
9111	Apr. 30	National Foster Care Month, 2014	25647
9112	Apr. 30	National Mental Health Awareness Month, 2014	25649
9113	Apr. 30	National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, 2014	25651
9114	Apr. 30	Older Americans Month, 2014	25653
9115	Apr. 30	Law Day, U.S.A., 2014	25655
9116	Apr. 30	Loyalty Day, 2014	25657
9117	Apr. 30	National Day of Prayer, 2014	25659
9118	May 2	National Charter Schools Week, 2014	26357
9119	May 8	Military Spouse Appreciation Day, 2014	27475
9120	May 9	National Defense Transportation Day and National Transportation Week, 2014	27719
9121	May 9	National Small Business Week, 2014	27721
9122	May 9	National Women's Health Week, 2014	27723
9123	May 9	Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week, 2014	27725
9124	May 9	Mother's Day, 2014	27727
9125	May 15	60th Anniversary of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*	29067
9126	May 16	National Safe Boating Week, 2014	29315
9127	May 16	Emergency Medical Services Week, 2014	29317
9128	May 16	World Trade Week, 2014	29319
9129	May 16	Armed Forces Day, 2014	29321
9130	May 19	National Maritime Day, 2014	30003
9131	May 21	Establishment of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument	30431
9132	May 23	National Hurricane Preparedness Week, 2014	30699
9133	May 23	Prayer for Peace, Memorial Day, 2014	30701
9134	May 30	African-American Music Appreciation Month, 2014	32423
9135	May 30	Great Outdoors Month, 2014	32425
9136	May 30	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month, 2014	32427

PROCLAMATIONS (Continued)

Proc. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
9137	May 30	National Caribbean-American Heritage Month, 2014	32429
9138	May 30	National Oceans Month, 2014	32431
9139	June 5	D-Day National Remembrance Day, 2014	33417
9140	June 6	Flag Day and National Flag Week, 2014	33645
9141	June 11	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, 2014	34401
9142	June 13	Father's Day, 2014	34997
9143	June 17	National Day of Making, 2014	35477
9144	June 20	70th Anniversary of the GI Bill of Rights	36179
9145	June 26	To Take Certain Actions Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act and for Other Purposes	37615
9146	June 30	50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act	38245

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

E.O. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
13656	Jan. 17	Establishment of Afghanistan and Pakistan Strategic Partnership Office and Amendment to Executive Order 12163	13656
13657	Feb. 10	Changing the Name of the National Security Staff to the National Security Council Staff	13657
13658	Feb. 12	Establishing a Minimum Wage for Contractors	13658
13659	Feb. 19	Streamlining the Export/Import Process for America's Businesses	13659
13660	Mar. 6	Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine	13660
13661	Mar. 16	Blocking Property of Additional Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine	13661
13662	Mar. 20	Blocking Property of Additional Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine	13662
13663	Mar. 20	Establishing an Emergency Board To Investigate Disputes Between the Long Island Rail Road Company and Certain of Its Employees Represented by Certain Labor Organizations	13663
13664	Apr. 3	Blocking Property of Certain Persons With Respect to South Sudan	13664
13665	Apr. 8	Non-Retaliation for Disclosure of Compensation Information	13665
13666	Apr. 18	Expanding Eligibility for the Defense Meritorious Services Medal	13666

EXECUTIVE ORDERS (Continued)

E.O. No.	Date 2014	Subject	79 F.R. Page
13667	May 12	Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Conflict in the Central African Republic	13667
13668	May 27	Ending Immunities Granted to the Development Fund for Iraq and Certain Other Iraqi Property and Interests in Property Pursuant to Executive Order 13303, as Amended	13668
13669	June 13	2014 Amendments to the Manual for Courts-Martial, United States	13669
13670	June 14	Establishing an Emergency Board To Investigate Disputes Between the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority and Certain of Its Employees Represented by Certain Labor Organizations	13670

OTHER PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Doc. No.	Date 2014	Subject	79 F.R. Page
	Jan. 9	Memorandum: Establishing a Quadrennial Energy Review	2577
2014–7	Jan. 17	Presidential Determination: Proposed Third Amendment to the Agreement for Co-operation Between the United States of America and the International Atomic Energy Agency	4611
	Jan. 20	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Under Section 1245(d)(5) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (Public Law 112–81)	6453
	Jan. 21	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process	3721
	Jan. 22	Memorandum: Establishing a White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault	4385
	Jan. 29	Memorandum: Retirement Savings Security	6455
	Jan. 30	Memorandum: Job-Driven Training for Workers	7041
	Jan. 31	Memorandum: Enhancing Safeguards To Prevent the Undue Denial of Federal Employment Opportunities to the Unemployed and Those Facing Financial Difficulty Through No Fault of Their Own	7045
	Jan. 31	Memorandum: Certification Concerning U.S. Participation in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali Consistent With Section 2005 of the American Servicemembers' Protection Act	8079

OTHER PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS (Continued)

Doc. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
	Feb. 4	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Situation in or in Relation to Côte d'Ivoire	7047
	Feb. 20	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Libya	10329
2014–8	Feb. 24	Presidential Determination: Proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy	12655
	Feb. 25	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels	10949
	Feb. 27	Memorandum: Creating and Expanding Ladders of Opportunity for Boys and Young Men of Color	12923
	Feb. 28	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Zimbabwe	12031
	Mar. 10	Order: Sequestration Order for Fiscal Year 2015 Pursuant to Section 251A of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act, as Amended	14365
	Mar. 12	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran	14607
	Mar. 13	Memorandum: Updating and Modernizing Overtime Regulations	15211
	Apr. 7	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Somalia	19803
	Apr. 8	Memorandum: Advancing Pay Equality Through Compensation Data Collection	20751
	May 7	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions of the Government of Syria	26589
	May 12	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Yemen	27477
	May 15	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma	28807
	May 19	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Stabilization of Iraq	29069
2014–9	May 19	Presidential Determination: Unexpected Urgent Refugee and Migration Needs Relating to South Sudan	31017
2014–10	June 2	Presidential Determination: Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act	33839

OTHER PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS (Continued)

Doc. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
2014–11	June 4	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination Pursuant to Section 1245(d)(4)(B) and (C) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012	33841
	June 9	Memorandum: Helping Struggling Federal Student Loan Borrowers Manage Their Debt	33843
	June 10	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions and Policies of Certain Members of the Government of Belarus and Other Persons To Undermine Belarus's Democratic Processes or Institutions	33847
	June 19	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Disposition of Russian Highly Enriched Uranium	35679
	June 20	Memorandum: Creating a Federal Strategy To Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators	35903
	June 20	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to North Korea	35909
	June 23	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Western Balkans	36181
	June 23	Memorandum: Enhancing Workplace Flexibilities and Work-Life Programs	36625

Subject Index

ABC, "Live! With Kelly & Michael" program—852
Action Network, National—391
Administrative Conference of the United States, Council of the—851
Afghanistan
  Afghan military and security forces—70, 312, 554–555, 596, 598–599, 603–604, 612, 714, 851
  Badakhshan Province landslide, damage and recovery efforts—505, 847
  Bagram Air Base—596, 851
  Democracy efforts—596, 599, 657, 675
  Detention facilities, transfer of responsibility to Afghan forces—715
  Elections—831
  Former regime—598, 631–632, 641, 851–853
  Insurgency and terrorist attacks—598
  International assistance—847
  International Security Assistance Force—18, 596, 598, 603, 714, 851
  NATO, role—312, 604
  President—831, 847, 851
  President Obama's visit—596, 851
  Presidential election—366, 604, 612, 675, 851
  Reconciliation efforts—605, 632, 657, 675, 823, 831, 851
  Reconstruction efforts—318, 598
  Relations with U.S.—367
  Security cooperation with U.S.—312, 599, 604, 831
  Sgt. Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, release from captivity by Taliban forces—631–633, 641, 664–665, 853
  U.S. Ambassador—596–598, 603, 851
  U.S. assistance—505, 604
  U.S. military forces
    Casualties—71, 405, 554–556, 599, 601–602, 611, 679, 728, 759, 812, 851
    Deployment—17–18, 69, 348, 379–380, 505, 554, 573, 589, 595–601, 603–605, 610, 612, 632, 714–715, 755, 758, 795, 827, 851
  Women, status—598, 675
Africa
  See also Developing countries; *specific country*
  African Union
    Peacekeeping efforts—716
    Somalia, role—520
  Central Africa, Lord's Resistance Army insurgent group—298–299, 716
  Economic growth and development—670
  Energy infrastructure, improvement efforts—71, 319, 521
  Relations with U.S.—824
Africa—Continued
  Trade with U.S.—751
  U.S. assistance—616
  Young African Leaders Initiative, White House—521
African Development Bank—847
African Development Foundation, U.S.—859
Agriculture
  Agriculture Act of 2014—138
  Domestic production, strengthening efforts—109
  Farm subsidies—101, 109
  Food markets and prices—138
  Severe drought, relief efforts—136–139, 831
Agriculture, Department of
  Congressional Relations, Assistant Secretary for—828
  Keepseagle class-action lawsuit on discrimination, settlement—720
  Rural development, loan assistance program—109
  Rural Development, Under Secretary for—848
  Secretary—108, 137–138, 827
  Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—101, 110
AIDS. *See* HIV/AIDS; *specific country or region*
Air Force, Department of the
  Assistant Secretaries
    Financial Management—831
    Installations, Environment, and Logistics—826
  General Counsel—840
Al Qaida. *See* Terrorism
Alabama
  Disaster assistance—847
  Former U.S. Senator, death—338
  Governor—173
Alaska
  Disaster assistance—823–824
  President's visit—846
Algeria, U.S. Ambassador—849
American. *See other part of subject*
American Indians and Alaska Natives
  Cobell class-action lawsuit on Indian trust management, settlement—720
  Education system, improvement efforts—721
  Job creation and growth—721
  Land trust and property rights, strengthening efforts—524
  Law enforcement, improvement efforts—721
  Native American youth, meeting with President—856
  Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, President Obama's visit—720
  Tribal nations, relations with Federal Government—720

Anti-Defamation League—127
Appropriations. *See* Budget, Federal
Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Access Board—836, 840
Arizona
  Governor—830, 855
  KPHO in Phoenix—836
  U.S. Representative, retirement—197
Arkansas
  Disaster assistance—821, 846
  Governor—174, 525–526, 846, 848
  President's visit—525, 847–848
  Tornadoes, damage and recovery efforts—487, 497, 525, 846, 848
Armed Forces, U.S.
  See also Defense and national security; Defense, Department of; *specific military branch*
  "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal—814
  Military families—64, 71, 174, 452–453, 598–599, 622
  National Guard—172
  Servicemembers
    Casualties—571, 594–595, 597, 601–602, 759, 839
    Deployment—714
    Meetings with President—836, 839, 854
    Military compensation and retirement systems, modernization efforts—499
    Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), treatment efforts—405
    POW/MIA remains, recovery efforts—631–632
    Service and dedication—69, 354, 358, 378–379, 406, 414, 453, 555, 571, 597–598, 605, 616, 622, 636, 679, 720, 758–760, 775
    Sexual assault—57, 61, 734
    Traumatic brain injuries, treatment efforts—619
Armenia, relations with Turkey—431
Arms and munitions
  See also specific country
  Chemical and biological weapons—115, 120, 277, 302, 305, 318, 320, 325, 329, 424, 474, 493, 673
  Conventional weapons transfer policy, U.S.—30–33
  Nuclear weapons and material
    Nonproliferation efforts—32, 38, 44, 81, 280–282, 287–288, 294–295, 320, 459–460, 474, 483, 537, 611, 658, 675
    Nuclear Security Summit—277–281, 284–285, 287–288, 294–298, 320, 837
    Security—282, 284, 288, 295–298
    Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons—294, 537
  Weapons of mass destruction—31, 48
Army, Department of the
  Assistant Secretaries
    Financial Management—842
    Manpower and Reserve Affairs—847
  Chief of Staff—610, 619, 840
Army, Department of the—Continued
  Deputy Secretary—377
  Secretary—377, 610
  Shooting at Fort Hood, TX—353–354, 358, 377–380, 840
  U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY—610, 852
Arts
  See also Smithsonian Institution
  "Cesar Chavez," White House screening—260, 262
  "In Performance at the White House: Women of Soul"—228
  "The Monuments Men," White House screening—830
  Turnaround Arts Talent Show, White House—850
Arts, Commission of Fine—855
Arts, National Council on the—847
Arts, National Endowment for the—829
Arts and Humanities, Federal Council on—96
Asia
  See also specific country
  Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—318, 422, 434, 446, 459, 467, 470, 475, 477, 481–482, 488, 493, 709, 823
  East Asia Summit—459, 467, 470, 488
  East China Sea, maritime territorial disputes—318, 423–424, 432, 446, 657, 675
  Economic growth and development—467
  Relations with Europe—305
  Relations with U.S.—305, 466–467, 487, 493
  South China Sea, maritime territorial disputes—278, 318, 422, 481, 488–489, 491–492, 499, 506, 611, 615, 657, 675, 709, 762
  Trade with U.S.—419
  Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative—466, 468–469, 475
Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, business and faith leaders, meeting with President—847
Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, President's Advisory Commission on—845
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)—470, 482
Atomic Energy Agency, International (IAEA)—80–81, 282, 284–285, 288, 296, 537, 564, 656
Attorney General. *See* Justice, Department of
Australia
  Afghanistan, role—708
  Defense relationship with U.S.—489, 708, 711
  Prime Minister—708, 846
  Relations with U.S.—708
Aviation, international travelers to U.S., entry process, improvement efforts—583–584
Awards. *See* Decorations, medals, and awards

Bahamas, U.S. Ambassador—828
Balkans, Western. *See* Europe
Bangladesh, U.S. Ambassador—851

Banks. *See* Business and industry; Development banks and funds
Basketball Association, National—461
Battle Monuments Commission, American—833, 844
Belarus
  Democracy efforts—701
  Human rights issues—701
  U.S. national emergency, continuation—700
Belgium
  Ambassador to U.S.—834
  Brussels
    Justus Lipsius Building—853
    Royal Palace of Brussels—853
    The Hotel—837–838, 853
  Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial in Waregem—300–302, 837
  King—300, 320, 658, 853
  Nuclear material, safe disposal, cooperation with U.S.—281, 284, 287
  President Obama's visit—300, 303, 311, 320, 658, 824, 837, 846, 853
  Prime Minister—281, 300, 320, 658, 853
  Queen—320
  Relations with U.S.—302, 320
  Security cooperation with U.S.—302
  U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—838
Board. *See other part of subject*
Border Health Commission, U.S.-Mexico—838
Botswana, U.S. Ambassador—856
Brazil, 2014 FIFA World Cup—779, 805, 855
Broadcasting Board of Governors—821, 831
Budget, Federal
  See also specific Federal agency or organization
  Amendments—795
  Appropriations
    Agriculture, Department of—505
    Consolidated—2, 20, 52–53
    Defense, Department of—505, 795
    District of Columbia—505
    Energy, Department of—505
    Homeland Security, Department of—505
    Interior, Department of the—505
    Science Foundation, National—505
    State, Department of—505, 795
  Congressional spending restraint—212
  Deficit and national debt—13, 63, 101, 110, 213, 238, 313, 366, 404, 553, 560, 568–569, 591, 707, 792
  Fiscal year 2015 budget—207, 212, 217, 233, 366, 505, 795
  Government programs, spending reductions—212, 526
  Public debt limit—134–135
Burma
  Democracy efforts—318, 469, 471, 564, 616
  Human rights issues—104
  President—104
  Relations with U.S.—474, 564, 615
  U.S. national emergency, continuation—563
Business and industry
  See also Commerce, international; Employment and unemployment; *specific State or company*
  Automobile industry
    Strengthening efforts—107, 529
  Business leaders, meetings with President—450–451, 570
  Domestic investment, promotion efforts—570, 739
  Entrepreneurship
    International partnerships—465
    Promotion efforts—477, 730, 732, 738, 748–749
  Foreign investment in U.S., promotion efforts—570
  Global competitiveness—48, 224, 770
  Information technology company executives, meeting with President—836
  Intellectual property law, strengthening efforts—162
  Manufacturing industry
    Advanced manufacturing, promotion efforts—26–27, 54, 64, 135, 175–178, 185, 187, 207, 212, 731, 784, 801, 831
    Government and private sector, coordination efforts—21, 176–179, 182, 543, 737–738
    Improvement—26, 402, 568, 748
    Strengthening efforts—21, 26, 207, 515, 730–731, 749
  Minority-owned businesses—29, 372
  Small businesses
    Economic impact—28–29, 371, 549
    Lending fund—371
    Promotion efforts—28, 64, 338, 371, 549, 736, 830
  Unemployed workers, hiring best practices and incentives—14, 21, 66, 91, 93–94, 111, 130, 144, 173, 826
  Wage discrimination—85, 243, 373–375, 396, 788

Cabinet
  See also specific Federal department or executive branch agency
  Meeting with President—20
Cabo Verde, U.S. Ambassador—856
California
  Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands in Rancho Mirage—829
  Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills—848
  California Coastal National Monument, boundary enlargement—236
  Democratic Party events—528, 534, 538, 848, 856
  Economic growth and development—236
  Fairmount San Jose Hotel in San Jose—848

California—Continued
Governor—137–140, 168, 174, 825
Los Angeles
Hyatt Regency Century hotel—848
USC Shoah Foundation—530–532, 848
NBC 7 in San Diego—836
President's visits—136, 138, 140, 528, 530, 534, 538, 542, 723, 825, 828–829, 847–848, 855–856
Severe drought, damage and recovery efforts—136–138, 140, 545, 790, 829
Tourism—236
University of California, Irvine in Irvine—723–724
U.S. Representative, retirement—20, 91, 147
Walmart store in Mountain View—542
Canada
Prime Minister—149, 152, 155, 830, 832, 856
Student exchanges with U.S.—150, 158
Trade with U.S.—150, 157
Caribbean Nations, regional security cooperation—154
CBS
CBS News—843
"CBS This Morning" program—859
"Evening News" program—838
Central African Republic
African Union, role—656
Democracy efforts—656, 674
Political unrest and violence—103–104, 116, 550, 611, 763
U.S. military detachment—298
U.S. sanctions—550–551
Central America
See also Commerce, international; *specific country*
Democracy efforts—16
Economic growth and development—16
Regional security cooperation—154
Central Intelligence Agency—244–245
Chad, U.S. military detachment—579, 716
Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board—826
Children and youth
See also Education
Childcare—768
Fathers, influence—722, 769
Healthy Kids & Safe Sports Concussion Summit, White House—607, 617, 852
Chile
Educational exchanges with U.S.—805
Energy, alternative and renewable sources and technologies—806
Free trade agreement with U.S.—805
President—805, 834, 848
Relations with U.S.—805–806
Security cooperation with U.S.—806
China
Economic growth and development—423, 478
Human rights issues—104, 278
China—Continued
President—278, 446, 834
Relations with U.S.—278, 423–424, 446, 489, 491, 762, 834
Civil rights
Civil Rights Act of 1964, 50th anniversary—841
Civil rights movement—233, 383–385, 391, 394–395, 565, 713, 746, 841
Firearm rights—698
Freedom of religion—5, 103–105, 397
Freedom of speech—595
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, equality—64, 205, 224, 518, 565, 744–746, 814–815
Minorities
Anti-Semitism—62, 104, 127, 397, 399, 495, 532
Minority rights and ethnic tolerance—471–472, 479, 533
Privacy—40–43, 45–51, 122, 134, 294, 316, 337–338, 512–514, 837
Racial equality—233, 258, 383–384, 386, 462, 518, 565, 761, 830, 849
Voting Rights Act of 1965—233
Wage equality—67, 73, 78, 85, 131, 135, 187, 203, 219, 246, 261, 266–267, 274, 350, 355, 373–377, 379–380, 396, 515, 535, 539, 570, 581, 586, 589, 707, 722, 733, 771, 781, 788–789, 797, 800–802
Women's rights and gender equality—67, 74, 243, 268, 376–377, 518, 521, 607, 618, 658, 675, 686, 697, 769, 788
Climate change. *See* Environment
CNN
"New Day" program—859
"The Lead" program—825
Colorado, Governor—171–172, 830, 855
Comfort Tech—843
Commerce, Department of
Deputy Secretary—851
Global Entrepreneurship, Presidential Ambassadors for, meeting with President—841
Industry and Analysis, Assistant Secretary for—851
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National—848, 853
Secretary—93–94, 173, 177, 400, 402, 488, 839, 841, 843
SelectUSA trade and investment initiative—173, 451, 482, 566, 570, 850
Commerce, international
See also specific country or region
Financial regulations, strengthening efforts—19, 668, 671
Fishing regulations, strengthening efforts—741–743
Free and fair trade—162, 668
Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)—528
Global financial markets, stabilization efforts—18–19, 668

Commerce, international—Continued
Group of Seven (G–7) nations—208, 210–211, 242–243, 277, 284, 306, 325, 329, 454, 490, 506–507, 649, 654, 658–659, 662, 667, 837, 845, 853
Group of Twenty (G–20) nations—314, 671, 709
Intellectual property law, strengthening efforts—482
North American Free Trade Agreement—153
U.S. exports
Expansion—64, 157, 485, 582, 748, 751
Export control reforms—157
National security issues—33
Whaling—345–347
Commission. *See other part of subject*
Communications
See also specific news organization, State, or country
Broadband and wireless technologies—89, 97–99, 108, 111, 182, 185, 198, 368, 515, 704, 831
News media, Presidential interviews—115, 406, 456, 485, 637, 658, 821, 824–827, 829, 831, 835–836, 838, 843, 848, 850, 852, 854, 859
Communications Commission, Federal—96, 98
Community Service, Corporation for National and—821, 823, 838
Congo, Democratic Republic of the, U.S. military detachment—298
Congress
Bipartisanship—4, 9, 63, 100, 110, 136, 207–208, 412, 553, 559, 572, 586, 667, 687, 706, 726, 740, 794, 807
Congressional Hispanic Caucus—553, 835
Friends of Ireland luncheon—835
House of Representatives
House Democratic Caucus—827, 835
House Democratic Issues Conference—134
Majority leader—409, 517, 843
Minority leader—134–136, 244, 271, 274, 344, 374, 380, 501, 528, 530, 534, 536, 568, 592, 766, 770, 796–797, 817, 839–840, 857
Speaker—62, 64, 205, 238, 505, 517, 552, 590, 707, 773, 807–808, 817, 831, 840, 857
Members, meetings with President—243, 822–823, 839–840
Senate
Intelligence Committee—244
Majority leader—273, 817, 826, 840, 857
Minority leader—203, 261, 517, 817, 840, 857
Presidential nominations, confirmation process—223
Senate Democratic Caucus—823, 858
Senate Democratic Issues Conference—827
Connecticut
2012 shooting in Newtown—698, 782
Governor—168, 170, 217–218, 220, 234, 313, 833
New Britain
Café Beauregard—217, 833
Central Connecticut State University—218
President's visit—217–218, 832–833
Conservation Voters, League of—775
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—786
Consumer Product Safety Commission—838, 849
Corporation. *See other part of subject*
Costa Rica, President-elect—847
Côte d'Ivoire
Democracy efforts—101
President—101
U.S. national emergency, continuation—101
Crime. *See* Law enforcement and crime
Cuba
Guantanamo Bay, U.S. Naval Base
Closure of detention facilities—70, 615
Detention of alleged terrorists—632, 641, 715, 852
Relations with U.S.—846
U.S. national emergency, continuation—180
Cultural Heritage Center—830
CVS Caremark Corp., decision to stop selling tobacco products—101
Czech Republic, U.S. Ambassador—833

Deaths
Angelou, Maya—617
Baker, former Sen. Howard H., Jr.—794
Dee, Ruby—713
Denton, former Sen. Jeremiah A., Jr.—338
Fraenkel, Naftali—816
Frank, Billy, Jr.—524
Márquez, Gabriel García—413
Mondale, Joan Adams—96
Oberstar, former Rep. James L.—515
Ramis, Harold—179
Seeger, Pete—62
Shaar, Gilad—816
Sharon, Ariel, former Prime Minister of Israel—14, 822
Strauss, Robert S.—262
Yifrach, Eyal—816
Decorations, medals, and awards
2013 Enrico Fermi Award—826
2014 National Teacher of the Year—846
Commander in Chief's Trophy—842
Congressional Gold Medal—688, 700, 830, 851
Medal of Honor—257–260, 554–555, 598, 757–759, 812, 830, 834, 843, 848, 850, 855, 858
Purple Heart—836
Teachers of the Year, National and State—502–503
TOP COPS award—547–548
Defense, Department of
See also Armed Forces, U.S.; Defense and national security; *specific military branch*
Acting Deputy Secretary—526
Defense leadership, meeting with President—827
Deputy Secretary—828
Funding—334, 526

Defense, Department of—Continued
Joint Chiefs of Staff—57, 353, 377, 600, 840
Principal Deputy Under Secretaries
Personnel and Readiness—831
Policy—826
Secretary—56–57, 414, 423, 526, 600, 821–822, 824, 828, 830, 833, 840, 843, 850, 852, 855, 858
Under Secretaries
Comptroller—826
Policy—826
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD—836
Defense and national security
See also Armed Forces, U.S.; Defense, Department of; Terrorism
Border security—552–553, 707
Classified national security information—40
Cybersecurity
Cyber attacks—134
Strengthening efforts—39, 44, 48, 133–134, 288, 316, 512, 614
Electronic surveillance program—22, 38, 40, 42–44, 46–51, 70, 121, 290, 294, 316, 337–338, 512–514, 516, 822–824
Intelligence—39–42, 44–49, 51, 293–294, 821–822, 837
National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012—773
Piracy, efforts to combat—320, 675
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board—854
Delaware, Governor—173
Democratic Party
See also specific State
Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee—271, 379, 528, 534, 567, 795–797
Democratic Governors Association—166, 169–170
Democratic National Committee—200, 223, 225, 271, 274, 354, 538, 744, 832, 834, 836, 840–841, 848–849, 856–857
Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee—215, 217, 237, 379, 528, 559, 585, 588, 706
Senate Democratic Issues Conference—827
Senate Majority PAC—857
Developing countries
See also Development banks and funds; *specific country or region*
Food security, strengthening efforts—116, 672
Government corruption—671
Health and medical care, promotion efforts—671
International assistance—319, 670
Poverty—335
U.S. assistance—764
Development, U.S. Agency for International—102, 105, 838, 842
Development banks and funds
See also Developing countries
Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International—828
Disability, National Council on—836
Disaster assistance
See also Natural disasters; *specific State, country, or executive branch agency*
Alabama—847
Alaska—823–824
Arkansas—821, 846
Florida—848
Georgia—828, 833
Indiana—844
Maryland—842
Mississippi—846
Montana—843
Nebraska—857
North Carolina—839
Oklahoma—826
Oregon—841
Pennsylvania—827
South Carolina—829, 835
Vermont—825
Washington—837, 840
West Virginia—822
Wildfires, prevention and response efforts—831
Diseases
See also HIV/AIDS
AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, Global Fund To Fight—116
Alzheimer's disease—100
Asthma and respiratory illnesses—630, 634, 790, 853
Diabetes, prevention and reduction efforts—100
Global influenza outbreak—154, 387
District of Columbia
2013 shooting at the Washington Navy Yard—548
Children's National Medical Center—630, 853
DC Central Kitchen—824
Democratic Party events—200, 832, 836
Ellipse on the National Mall—850
Ford's Theatre—858
Friendship Park—850
Georgetown Waterfront Park—859
Marine Barracks—859
Newseum—833
Nineteenth Street Baptist Church—844
Omni Shoreham Hotel—858
Powell Elementary School—212, 832
Shake Shack restaurant—564
Djibouti
Defense relationship with U.S.—519–522
Economic growth and development—520–521
President—519–520, 843
Relations with U.S.—519, 522

Djibouti—Continued
U.S. Ambassador—840
U.S. assistance—521
Drug abuse and trafficking
See also specific country or region
Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act—629
Foreign narcotics traffickers—629
Interdiction efforts—158

Economy, international. *See* Commerce, international
Economy, national
See also Budget, Federal; Employment and unemployment; *specific State*
Economic concerns—7, 15, 25, 34, 63, 172, 265, 391, 401, 529, 535, 539, 568, 586, 589, 681, 796, 799, 804
Government bonds, creditworthiness—63
Household incomes, decline—73–78, 82, 85, 95, 107, 111, 130, 142, 144, 167, 171, 221, 272, 349, 767, 780
Improvement—2, 8, 13, 20–22, 25, 28, 34, 59, 63, 73, 76–77, 82, 91, 95, 107, 142, 144, 167, 172, 176, 181, 187, 201, 216, 218, 224, 237, 243, 246, 253, 265, 272, 274, 331, 348, 354, 368, 381, 391, 529, 534, 538, 543, 556, 560, 568, 585, 588, 610, 780, 799, 804
Income inequality, increase—95, 181, 185, 187, 191, 201, 238, 253, 355, 474, 560, 589, 681, 800, 830
Inflation, efforts to combat—2
Poverty, efforts to combat—7, 10–12, 216
Recession, effects—73
Strengthening efforts—1–2, 7, 9, 13, 19, 21, 25, 34, 52–53, 60, 63, 66, 73–77, 82, 88, 95–96, 100, 110–111, 125, 130–131, 133–135, 142, 144, 167, 170, 173, 176, 181, 184–185, 187–189, 191–192, 201–202, 212–213, 216, 231, 233, 246, 248, 271, 273, 313, 349, 355, 366, 368, 374, 381, 391, 401, 404, 410, 412, 515, 539–540, 557, 560–561, 564, 578, 580, 626, 631, 740, 750, 766, 780, 800, 802, 804, 822, 827, 851, 857
Travel and tourism, promotion efforts—566, 578, 581–583
Education
See also specific State
Bullying, prevention efforts—745, 815
Early childhood education programs—67, 88, 97, 173, 194, 212, 231, 238, 273, 368, 540, 569, 586, 589, 626, 707, 764–765, 769, 797, 800
Foreign exchange programs—148, 150, 157, 422, 430, 435, 468, 482–483, 523, 546, 781, 805
Global competitiveness—66, 73, 83, 92, 97, 108, 111, 197, 219, 224, 231, 266, 349, 369, 402, 477, 523, 535, 539, 586, 704, 822
High school dropout rate and prevention programs—35, 88, 231, 238, 391, 529, 560, 589, 626
Education—Continued
Hispanic students
Dropout and completion rates—88
Performance and completion, improvement efforts—523, 568, 589
Low-income students—36–37
Minority students—67, 194, 626
Postsecondary education
Affordability—21, 35, 66–67, 90, 97, 203, 219, 231–232, 349, 368, 540, 560, 569, 580, 586, 589, 680–682, 689–690, 694, 704, 707, 735, 740, 783, 786
Career training and continuing education—21, 66–67, 73, 83, 108, 212, 219, 231, 266, 349, 370–371, 401–403, 787
College opportunity, expansion efforts—33–37, 64, 232, 529, 560, 568, 589, 680, 684, 694
Community colleges—265, 403, 477, 787
Pell grants—232, 682
Scholarship and financial aid forms, simplification—229, 231–232
Sexual assault, prevention efforts—58, 61, 734
Student loan programs, improvement efforts—67, 88, 202, 219, 232, 349, 680, 682–683, 689, 691–692, 695, 704–705, 735, 783, 801
School improvement and renovation—368
Science and math programs—88, 98, 147, 430, 606–608, 692–693, 732–733, 749, 784–785
Standards and school accountability—21, 35, 67, 224, 231, 369
Teachers—35, 88, 99, 147, 231, 502–503, 607, 692, 791
Technology and innovation, expansion efforts—67, 89, 97–99, 108, 111, 130, 182, 185, 197–199, 231, 368, 608, 704, 707, 739, 831
Vocational and technical education programs—83–84, 90, 369–370, 400, 402–404, 691, 696–697, 703, 706, 732–733, 749, 787
Education, Department of
Assistant Secretaries
Management—834
Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development—846
Deputy Secretary—626–627
Race to the Top Fund—66, 88, 97
Secretary—56–57, 96, 502, 605, 683, 696, 703, 732, 824, 855
Educational Excellence for African Americans, President's Commission on—823
Egypt
Democracy efforts—209
Human rights issues—5, 855
Political unrest and violence—317
President—855
Relations with Israel—209, 615
Relations with U.S.—209, 855
Transitional military government—615

Egypt—Continued
U.S. Ambassador—848
U.S. military detachment—716
Elections
See also specific State or country
2014 congressional elections—166, 201–202, 217, 225, 273, 356, 380, 382, 530, 535–536, 539, 541, 561, 567, 587–588, 590, 707, 797
Election Administration, Presidential Commission on—55–56, 69, 393
Voter participation—55–56, 167, 205–206, 382, 392–395, 530, 536, 541, 561, 570, 587, 590, 708
Emergency Boards, Presidential
No. 245—836
No. 246—856
Emergency Management Agency, Federal. *See* Homeland Security, Department of
Employment and unemployment
See also Economy, national; *specific State*
Job creation and growth—14, 21, 27–28, 54, 73, 77, 82–83, 107–108, 111, 134, 166, 172, 177, 187–189, 207, 212, 219, 224, 237, 266, 505, 514, 543, 564, 566, 578, 580, 681, 687, 730, 740, 748, 751, 767, 827
Job training and assistance programs—53, 66, 84, 93–94, 111, 130, 135, 144, 172–173, 182, 402–403, 477, 515, 543, 626, 859
Older workers, job market challenges—735
Unemployment insurance—1–4, 9, 13, 21, 25, 66, 92–93, 202, 372, 396, 514, 517, 800
Unemployment rate—2, 4, 34, 125, 166, 557, 822
Young adults, employment opportunities—764
Energy
See also Environment; *specific State or country*
Alternative and renewable sources and technologies
Promotion efforts—101, 109, 315, 540–541, 544, 569, 589, 630, 633–634, 659, 669, 727, 777
U.S. production—54, 529, 543, 589, 725, 727, 790
Carbon dioxide emissions, reduction—65, 224, 277, 279, 315
Coal and clean coal technologies—280
Developing countries, energy sources—161, 280, 659, 670, 727, 778, 790
Domestic sources—54, 65, 83, 144, 224, 237, 307, 310, 543, 569, 589, 725
Energy efficiency and weatherization, homes and buildings—544, 777
Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening efforts—65, 144–146, 158, 529, 534, 543, 568, 587, 630, 725, 777, 790
Gasoline, oil, and natural gas costs—719
Greenhouse gas emissions, regulation—630–631, 633–634, 647, 659, 725, 777, 790
Hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles, promotion efforts—146
Energy—Continued
National energy policy—65
Nuclear energy
Promotion and expansion efforts—297
Safety and environmental issues—434
Oil and gas industry, Keystone XL Pipeline project—160–161
Solar and wind energy—65, 543–544, 587, 630
Energy, Department of
Clean Fleets Partnership, National—146
Environmental Management, Assistant Secretary for—833
Secretary—24, 544, 823
Energy Regulatory Commission, Federal—826
England. *See* United Kingdom
Environment
See also Energy
Air quality, improvement efforts—630–631, 634
Carbon emissions—60, 139, 144, 160, 237, 476, 543, 568, 629–630, 633–634, 659, 669, 724, 776–778, 789
Climate change—60, 65, 139, 212, 216, 228, 277–279, 305, 315, 319, 430, 434, 469, 476, 524, 540, 545, 586–587, 589, 615, 629–630, 633, 647, 659, 669–670, 687, 708, 724–727, 762, 776–778, 789–790, 831, 853
Conservation
Fishery stocks, management efforts—741–743
International promotion efforts—154
Promotion efforts—101, 236, 248, 578, 778
Watersheds and estuaries, protection efforts—687
Wildlife preservation, strengthening efforts—127, 236, 248
Deforestation, prevention efforts—476
Oceans, coasts, and lakes, protection and restoration efforts—248
Quality and improvement efforts—65, 544, 776
Water management policy, improvement efforts—136–140, 687
Environmental Cooperation, Commission for, Joint Public Advisory Committee—822
Environmental Protection Agency—146, 630, 633, 826, 840
ESPN—836
Estonia, President—834
Europe
See also specific country
Central and Eastern European leaders, meeting with President Obama—648
Energy sources, diversification efforts—307, 310, 506, 639, 647–648, 658–659, 668–669
European Union
Counterterrorism efforts, cooperation with U.S.—316
Cybersecurity, cooperation with U.S.—316

Europe—Continued
European Union—Continued
Eastern Europe, economic stabilization efforts—317
European Commission President—303, 331, 837, 853
European Council President—303, 331, 838, 853
High Representative for Foreign Affairs—656, 674
Relations with Russia—306
Relations with U.S.—313
Security cooperation with U.S.—317, 319–320
Summit—838
U.S. mission personnel, meeting with President Obama—838
Visa policy, U.S.—316
Financial markets
Stabilization efforts—19, 125, 314, 330–331
Unrest—15
Relations with Asia—305
Relations with U.S.—293, 305–306
Security and Co-operation in Europe, Organization for—283, 506, 511, 654, 672
Security cooperation with U.S.—328
Trade with U.S.—307
Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership—15, 19, 116, 125, 248, 277, 305, 307, 314, 329, 639, 647, 751, 830
Unemployment rate—331
Western Balkans
NATO presence and peacekeeping efforts—317
U.S. national emergency, continuation—772
Export Council, President's—832

Faith-based and community organizations, programs and services—398
FBI. *See* Justice, Department of
Federal. *See other part of subject*
FEMA. *See* Homeland Security, Department of
Financial Capability for Young Americans, President's Advisory Council—847
Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition, President's Council on—845, 851
Florida
Coral Reef Senior High School in Miami—229–230
Democratic Party events—271
Disaster assistance—848
President's visits—229, 265, 271, 833–834, 836
Valencia College, West Campus, in Orlando—265, 836
Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court—40, 42–44, 338
Foreign policy, U.S.
See also specific country or region
Civil and human rights, promotion efforts—32–33, 61, 104, 143, 464, 469, 481, 520, 546, 611, 615
Democratization—32, 61, 71, 215, 325, 469, 615, 652–653
Foreign policy, U.S.—Continued
Diplomatic efforts, expansion—70, 292, 448, 474–475, 493, 612–614
Diplomatic security, strengthening efforts—717, 729, 794
Foreign Ambassadors, credentialing ceremony—834, 850
Humanitarian assistance programs—484, 613
Peace efforts, expansion—611
Refugee admittance policy—764
Fox News—826
France
Château de Bénouville in Bénouville—854
D-day landing at Normandy, 70th anniversary—659, 663, 676–679, 854
Defense relationship with U.S.—122
Foreign Affairs and International Development, Minister of—854
Military equipment sale to Russia—662
Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer—854
Paris
Le Chiberta restaurant—854
Paris Orly International Airport—854
Restaurant Helen—854
U.S. Ambassador's residence—854
Political Affairs and Security, Director General—854
President—112–113, 115, 128, 272, 644, 661–662, 676, 827–828, 832, 834, 842, 845, 849, 854, 858
President Obama's visit—676, 846, 854
Relations with U.S.—112–113, 115–116, 121, 128, 661, 676
Sword Beach in Ouistreham—854
Trade with U.S.—116
U.S. Ambassador—855
U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—854
Funny or Die website, "Between Two Ferns" program—831

Gap Inc., decision to increase employee wages—152
Georgia, disaster assistance—828, 833
Germany
Chancellor—408, 505, 821, 830, 832–834, 836, 841, 843, 845, 847, 858
President Obama's visits—839, 852
Ramstein Air Force Base—839, 852
Relations with U.S.—505–506, 512–514
ZDF public television broadcaster—824
Global Development Council—842
Google+ Hangouts, virtual road trip with President—826

Government organization and employees
See also Budget, Federal; *specific agency or organization*
Faith-based and community organizations, partnerships—103, 626
Federal Government contracting policies, reform—28, 68, 75, 85, 130, 132–133, 135, 142, 144, 152, 170, 182, 185, 203, 220–221, 234, 246, 266, 274, 351, 373, 375, 377, 380, 396, 450, 501, 515, 581, 746, 801
Federal infrastructure review and permitting, modernization efforts—388, 557, 566, 581
Funding lapse and partial furlough—52, 63, 388, 414, 792
Recruitment and retention, strengthening efforts—91, 94–95
Restructuring and reform—569
Governors Association, National—169, 171–173, 822
Great Britain. *See* United Kingdom
Great Lakes Fishery Commission, U.S. Section—859
Guantanamo Bay, U.S. Naval Base. *See* Cuba
Guatemala, U.S. Ambassador—853

Haiti
Democracy efforts—106
Earthquake, damage and recovery efforts—106
President—106
Relations with U.S.—106
U.S. assistance—106
Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation—840
Hawaii
Governor—170, 502
Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay—821
Minimum wage legislation, passage—502
President's visit—821
Health and Human Services, Department of
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—618–619
Children and Families, Assistant Secretary for—828
Institutes of Health, National—360, 605, 618, 747
Secretary—56–57, 174, 387, 519, 625, 667, 824, 843, 858
U.S. Holocaust Survivor Services, Special Envoy for—532
Health and medical care
See also Diseases; HIV/AIDS; Science and technology
Affordability and costs—13, 54, 102, 168, 342–343, 388, 407, 568, 586, 589
Contraception and family planning—59
Cost control reforms—204, 213, 407
Employer-based health insurance coverage—123–124
Exercise—618
Health and medical care—Continued
Health insurance exchanges—68–69, 76, 86, 124, 131, 136, 168, 183–184, 186, 219, 237, 261, 268–269, 275, 342, 344, 387, 406, 822, 831, 834, 838
Health insurance executives, meeting with President—843
Health insurance reforms—25, 68–69, 76, 78, 86, 100, 173, 183, 204, 237, 268, 275, 342, 344, 352, 374, 410, 560, 721, 771, 815, 830
Insurance coverage and access to providers—78, 108, 111, 123–124, 131, 167, 174, 183, 205, 224, 246, 269, 275, 342–344, 348, 355, 366, 374, 376, 387, 391–392, 406, 523, 529, 543, 707
Medical fraud and negligence, efforts to combat and prevent—388
Medicare and Medicaid—7, 69, 136, 168, 174, 411
Mental health programs and services—378
Nurses, meeting with President—855
Nutrition—101, 110
Obesity, prevention and reduction efforts—64
Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act—175, 186, 275, 333, 342–344, 387–388, 406–407, 410–413, 515, 735, 831, 833–835, 838–839, 843
Research and development—100, 360, 587, 749
Smoking cessation programs—101
Women's health issues—203, 269, 396, 769
Young adults, insurance coverage as dependents, age limit extension—136
HIV/AIDS
See also specific country or region
Domestic prevention and treatment strategy—746, 815
International prevention and treatment efforts—671, 815
Holidays and special observances
Armenian Remembrance Day—430–431
Ash Wednesday—223
Cinco de Mayo—522–524
Coptic Orthodox Christmas—5
Day of Making, National—749
Earth Day—430
Easter—223, 397–398, 415–416, 844
Father's Day—722–723
Greek Independence Day—841
Holocaust Remembrance Day—495
Holocaust Remembrance Day, International—62
International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia—565
Juneteenth—761
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month—813
Lunar New Year—824
Martin Luther King, Jr., Day—824
Memorial Day—594–596, 599–602, 852
Nowruz—270–271

Holidays and special observances—Continued
Passover—397, 399, 416, 843
Ramadan—803–804
Small Business Week, National—549
St. Patrick's Day—250
World Refugee Day—763
Holocaust Memorial Council, U.S.—831, 833, 842, 845, 851, 853
Holy See (Vatican City)
Canonization of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II—495, 842
Pope—103, 328, 331–332, 335, 398, 495, 838
President Obama's visit—824, 838
Secretary of State—333, 838
U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—838
Homeland Security, Department of
See also Defense and national security; Terrorism
Emergency Management Agency, Federal—417, 487, 525, 628, 780, 852
Secretary—409–410, 580, 628, 808, 818, 835, 853
Under Secretaries
Intelligence and Analysis—829
Science and Technology—826
Honduras
President-elect—823
U.S. Ambassador—847
Housing
Homelessness—64
Housing market—591
Housing and Urban Development, Department of
Assistant Secretaries
Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations—833
Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity—823
Chief Financial Officer—835
Deputy Secretary—833
Secretary—544, 560, 591
Housing Finance Agency, Federal—851
Humanities, National Endowment for the—842
Hurricanes. *See* Disaster assistance; Natural disasters; *specific Federal agency or State*

Iceland, whaling—345–347
Idaho, Governor—855
Illinois
Chicago
Chicago Cut Steakhouse—840
Fire and Police Departments, meeting with President—840
Valois Restaurant—851
Democratic Party events—354, 585, 588, 840
Governor—170, 175, 588, 851
President's visits—353–354, 585, 588, 839–840, 850–851
Immigration and naturalization
See also Defense and national security; *specific country or region*
American "melting pot"—764
Citizenship—436–437, 552–553, 809
Illegal immigration—635, 807, 817
Reform—21, 54, 65, 136, 157, 205, 213, 233, 238, 251, 261–262, 273, 313, 332, 355, 381, 404, 409, 437, 523–524, 535, 552–553, 561, 570, 586, 589, 707, 802, 806–808, 835, 843, 847, 855, 857
Unaccompanied alien children at Mexico-U.S. border, response to influx—635, 807–808, 817–818, 857
Visa policy, U.S.—316, 415, 463, 483, 583
India
Ambassador to U.S.—834
Elections—549
Prime Minister—850
Prime Minister-elect—849–850
Relations with U.S.—549, 849–850
Indiana, disaster assistance—844
Indonesia, relations with U.S.—467
Insurance Commissioners, National Association of—843
Integrated Drought Information System, National—228
Intel Science Talent Search—834
Intellectual Disabilities, President's Committee for People With—848
Intelligence. *See* Defense and national security; *specific Federal agency*
Intelligence, Office of the Director of National—42, 44, 48–52
Intelligence Advisory Board, President's—51
Intelligence and Communications, Review Group on—41, 43
Inter-American Development Bank—826
Inter-American Foundation—829
Interior, Department of the
Bureau of Reclamation—138
Geological Survey, U.S.—822
Indian Affairs, Assistant Secretary for—720
Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, establishment—577–578, 850
Public lands, conservation and management—578–579
Reclamation, Commissioner of—833
Secretary—345–346, 576–578, 720
International. *See other part of subject*
Investigation, Federal Bureau of. *See* Justice, Department of
Iran
Human rights issues—105
International and U.S. sanctions—15–16, 71, 115, 120
International diplomatic efforts—15–16, 71, 120, 122, 209, 245, 270, 277, 305, 317, 614, 656, 674, 824, 858

Iran—Continued
Nuclear weapons development—14–16, 70–71, 115, 120, 122, 209, 245, 270, 277, 305, 317, 506, 614, 656, 674
President—270
Relations with Iraq—757
Supreme Leader—270
Terrorism sponsorship—674
U.S. national emergency, continuation—245
Iraq
Council of Representatives, Speaker—824
Democracy efforts—504, 567, 752, 754, 756
Development Fund for Iraq, termination of U.S. immunities granted—609
International diplomatic efforts—752
Iraqi military and security forces—717, 719, 752, 756, 794
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization—717–719, 752–756, 794
Parliamentary elections—504
Political unrest and violence—709–710, 717–719, 729, 752, 754–757, 763, 792, 794, 819, 855–858
Prime Minister—710, 753–754, 756
Reconciliation efforts—718–719, 752–754, 756–757
Reconstruction efforts—567
Relations with Iran—757
Security cooperation with U.S.—729, 752, 794, 819
Speaker of Iraqi Council of Representatives—756
U.S. Ambassador—848
U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal—754
U.S. assistance—717–718, 756
U.S. military detachment—752, 819
U.S. national emergency, continuation—567
Ireland
Ambassador to U.S.—250
Financial markets, stabilization efforts—248
Prime Minister—248, 250, 252, 835
Relations with Northern Ireland—249, 251
Relations with U.S.—248
Trade with U.S.—248
U.S. Ambassador—854
Ireland, Northern. *See* United Kingdom, Northern Ireland
Israel
See also Middle East
Former Prime Minister, death—14, 822
Independence Day—524
Kidnapping and murder of Israeli teenagers—816
President—525, 700, 858
President-elect—700
Presidential election—700
Prime Minister—208, 256–257, 525, 828
Relations with Egypt—209
Relations with U.S.—14, 208, 524, 700, 816
Security cooperation with U.S.—208, 524
Italy
Afghanistan, role—830
Economic reforms—329, 331
Libya, role—830
Minister of Foreign Affairs—328
Nuclear material, safe disposal, cooperation with U.S.—281–282, 284, 287, 329
President—281, 328–329, 334, 838
President Obama's visit—326, 328, 824, 838
Prime Minister—326, 829–830, 834, 838, 845, 858
Relations with U.S.—328–329, 829
Rome
Colosseum—838
Quirinal Palace—838
Villa Madama—838
U.S. Ambassador—838
U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—838
U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies in Rome personnel, meeting with President Obama—838

Japan
Defense relationship with U.S.—419, 422, 424–425, 432–433
Emperor—421, 431, 844–845
Empress—421, 431, 844–845
Maritime territorial dispute with China—423–424, 432
Miraikan Science Expo in Tokyo—429
North Korea, abductions of Japanese citizens—844
Nuclear material, safe disposal, cooperation with U.S.—280, 284, 287
Nuclear power plants in Fukushima—430
President Obama's visit—419–421, 429, 431, 828, 844
Prime Minister—280, 299, 419–420, 430–431, 435–436, 446, 833, 837, 844
Relations with South Korea—446
Relations with U.S.—299–300, 420, 422, 431–432, 435–436, 833
Science and technology, cooperation with U.S.—429
Student exchanges with U.S.—422, 430, 435
Tokyo
Hotel Okura Tokyo—844–845
Imperial Palace—844
Meiji Jingu shrine—844
National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan)—844
Sukiyabashi Jiro restaurant—844
Trade with U.S.—299
U.S. Ambassador—844
U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—845
Jordan
Economic growth and development—140
King—140, 825, 828–829, 850
Political reform efforts—140

Jordan—Continued
Relations with U.S.—140, 850
Security cooperation with U.S.—716
United Nations Security Council, membership status—140
U.S. Ambassador—842
U.S. assistance—141
Judiciary
Federal court nominations and confirmations—20, 823, 827, 829, 832, 835, 840, 842, 847–848, 850, 855–856, 858–859
Supreme Court
Associate Justices—19
Brown v. *Board of Education* decision, 60th anniversary—565
Roe v. *Wade* decision, 41st anniversary—59
Justice, Department of
Attorney General—42–44, 49–51, 56–57, 337, 393–394, 512, 661, 808, 824
Bureau of Investigation, Federal—42, 354, 840
Civil Rights, Assistant Attorney General for—223
Marshals Service, U.S.—835
U.S. attorneys—835, 858

Kansas, shootings in Overland Park—396–397, 399, 532
Kazakhstan
Nuclear security, cooperation with U.S.—295
President—295, 834, 837
U.S. Ambassador—847
Kennedy Center. *See* Smithsonian Institution
Kentucky, Governor—69
Kosovo, KFOR international security force—716

Labor, Department of
Deputy Secretary—367, 821
Secretary—75, 84, 94, 130, 217–218, 222, 246–247, 375, 377, 402, 766, 771, 798, 802, 813, 833, 859
Women's Bureau—833
Labor issues
Labor movement and unions—736
Minimum wage—67–68, 74–76, 78, 85, 108, 111, 130–133, 135–136, 142–144, 152, 167–171, 173, 182, 185, 187, 203–204, 217, 220–222, 225, 234, 243, 246, 261, 266, 268, 273–274, 313, 348, 350–353, 368, 372, 376, 381, 386, 392, 396, 450, 500–502, 514–515, 535, 539, 561, 569, 581, 586, 589, 707–708, 723, 733, 761, 768, 770–771, 781, 800–801, 840
Overtime pay regulations, modernization efforts—245–247, 253, 396
Workplace flexibility, improvement efforts—74, 78, 85, 203, 243, 246, 266–268, 274, 396, 722, 734, 765, 767–771, 781, 788–789, 802
Labor Relations Authority, Federal—829
Latvia, President—834

Law enforcement and crime
Capital punishment—512
Criminal justice system, reform efforts—830
Domestic violence—56–57
Gun control—697–698, 782
Gun violence, prevention efforts—69, 698, 782
Illegal arms trade, reduction efforts—158
Law enforcement leaders, meeting with President—552
Law enforcement officers, service and dedication—547–548
Police Organizations, National Association of—547
Sexual assault—56–58, 61, 824
State and community law enforcement agencies, Federal support—39, 549
Transnational criminal organizations—31, 33, 44, 48, 154, 158
Wildlife trafficking—127
Lebanon
Democracy efforts—837
Hizballah political-paramilitary organization—70
Prime Minster—837
Relations with U.S.—837
U.S. assistance—116
Legion, American—844
Legislation, enacted
Agricultural Act of 2014—106–110
Congressional Gold Medal to 65th Infantry Regiment, legislation awarding—687
Congressional Gold Medal to World War II members of "Doolittle Tokyo Raiders," legislation awarding—851
Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014—52
Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act—360
National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2014—228
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Conservation and Recreation Act—248
United Nations representatives, legislation on U.S. visa limitations—415
Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014—687
Legislation, proposed
Agricultural Act of 2014—100
Public debt limit, legislation increasing—134
Libya
2012 attack on U.S. mission in Benghazi—729, 741
Democracy efforts—169, 317, 329, 656, 741, 793
Elections—793
Khattala, Ahmed Abu, capture by U.S. Special Forces and FBI personnel in Benghazi—729, 741
NATO role—329
Political unrest and violence—16, 656, 674
Relations with U.S.—793
United Nations Support Mission—674
U.S. national emergency, continuation—169

Liechtenstein, U.S. Ambassador—826
Lithuania, President—834

Make-A-Wish foundation—842
Malaria. *See* Diseases
Malaysia
  Civil society leaders, meeting with President Obama—846
  Economic growth and development—458, 477, 482
  Human rights issues—464
  King—454, 458, 466, 845
  Kuala Lumpur
    Istana Negara Palace—845
    Masjid Negara (National Mosque)—845
    Parliament House—845
    Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur hotel—845–846
    Seri Perdana—845
  Malaysian Airlines Flight 370, disappearance—458, 463, 481
  Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre in Cyberjaya—465, 846
  President Obama's visit—454–456, 458, 465–466, 470, 480, 484, 828, 845–846
  Prime Minister—455–456, 465–466, 468, 476–477, 480, 484–485, 845–846
  Queen—455–456, 458
  Relations with U.S.—456, 458–459, 468, 480–481, 484–485, 493
  Security cooperation with U.S.—483
  Trade with U.S.—482–485
  Treasury Secretary-General—846
  U.S. assistance—463, 484
  U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—845
  U.S. visa policy—463, 483
Mali
  Democracy efforts—656
  Political unrest and violence—116, 674
  United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission—656, 674
Management and Budget, Office of—53, 388, 591, 847
Maritime Regulatory Commission, Federal—826
Maryland
  Bladensburg High School in Bladensburg—367–368, 370–371, 841
  Buck Lodge Middle School in Adelphi—96
  Costco Wholesale Corp. Woodmore Towne Centre Warehouse in Glenarden—72–73, 825
  Democratic Party event—567
  Disaster assistance—842
  Governor—72, 75, 168, 170, 172, 367–368, 372
  Joint Base Andrews—828
  Minimum wage legislation, passage—372
Maryland—Continued
  President's visits—72, 96, 134, 143, 367, 567, 825–826, 829, 836, 841, 850
  Safeway Inc. distribution center in Upper Marlboro—143
  U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis—414, 842
  Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda—759, 836
Massachusetts
  2013 Boston Marathon bombing—171, 340–341, 399, 468, 548, 843
  Democratic Party events—223, 706
  Governor—170–171, 173, 217–218, 220, 223–225, 234, 313, 701–702, 704, 706, 708, 761, 833
  Minimum wage legislation, passage—761
  NECN in Newton—836
  President's visits—223, 701, 706, 832–833, 855
  Worcester Technical High School in Worcester—701–704, 706, 733
Mayors, U.S. Conference of—59–60, 764
Medal of Science, President's Committee on the National—833
Medals. *See* Decorations, medals, and awards
Medicare and Medicaid. *See* Health and medical care
Mexico
  Ambassador to U.S.—523
  Counternarcotics efforts, cooperation with U.S.—158
  Economic growth and development—164
  North America, Under Secretary for—523
  Political reform efforts—164, 822
  President—147, 149, 152, 155, 818, 822, 830, 857
  President Obama's visit—147, 149–150, 155, 157, 822, 830
  Relations with U.S.—147, 165, 523
  Student exchanges with U.S.—148, 150, 158, 523
  Toluca
    Cosmovitral—830
    International Airport of Toluca—830
    Palacio de Gobierno—830
    Palacio de Justicia—830
  Trade with U.S.—150, 157, 822
Mexico Border Health Commission, U.S.- —835
Michigan
  Ann Arbor
    University of Michigan—347
    Zingerman's Delicatessen—840
  Michigan Biotechnology Institute—827
  Michigan State University in East Lansing—106
  President's visit—106, 347, 827, 839–840
  U.S. Representative, retirement—175

Middle East
See also Palestinian Authority and Palestinians; *specific country*
Arab-Israeli conflict, peace process—14, 55, 70, 104, 116, 141, 209, 256–257, 317, 443–444, 474, 524, 657, 675, 709, 836
Security cooperation with U.S.—795
Syrian conflict, displaced persons—763
Terrorists who threaten to disrupt the peace process, U.S. national emergency, continuation—55
Military Academy, U.S. *See* Army, Department of the
Millennium Challenge Corporation—828
Minnesota
Democratic Party event—795
Floods, damage and recovery efforts—780, 791, 859
Former U.S. Representative, death—515
Governor—187, 387, 780, 797
Minimum wage legislation, passage—386
Minneapolis
KARE—836
Matt's Bar & Grill—796, 798, 859
Minnesota Workforce Development Center—859
President's visits—186, 779, 795, 797, 830–831, 858–859
Saint Paul
Golden Fig food market—859
Grand Ole Creamery ice cream shop—798, 859
Metro Transit Light Rail Operations and Maintenance Facility—831
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel in Bloomington—859
Mississippi, disaster assistance—846
Mississippi River Commission—851
Missouri, KSDK in St. Louis—836
Moldova
Prime Minister—832
U.S. Ambassador—851
Monetary Fund, International—240, 263, 284, 290, 364, 644, 649, 654, 829, 840
Montana
Disaster assistance—843
Governor—855
MSNBC, "Morning Joe" program—859
My Brother's Keeper Task Force—626–627

NAACP—849
NAFTA. *See* Commerce, international
National. *See other part of subject*
National security. *See* Defense and national security
NATO. *See* North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Natural disasters
See also Disaster assistance; *specific State or country*
Central Arkansas, tornadoes—487, 525, 846
Hurricane Sandy—591
Minnesota, floods—859
Preparedness efforts—628–629, 831
Natural disasters—Continued
Response and recovery efforts—553, 628–629, 831
Western States, wildfires—831, 855
Wildfires, prevention and response efforts—174, 790
Navy, Department of the
2013 shooting at the Washington Navy Yard—548
U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD—414, 842
NBC
"Ellen" program—836
"NBC Nightly News With Brian Williams" program—854
NBC Sports—827
Nebraska, disaster assistance—857
Netherlands
Amsterdam
Rijksmuseum—837
Royal Palace—837
Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin in Noordsijk—837
King—277, 287, 837
President Obama's visit—275–276, 278, 284–285, 299, 824, 837
Prime Minister—275, 279, 284–285, 837
Relations with U.S.—277
The Hague
Catshuis—837
World Forum—837
Trade with U.S.—277
U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—837
Nevada, Governor—831
New Hampshire, Governor—166, 220
New Jersey
Governor—168, 170, 517, 562
Hurricane Sandy, damage and recovery efforts—560
U.S. Representative, retirement—100, 147
New Mexico
Governor—173
Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument—577–578, 850
New York
Democratic Party events—237, 559, 744, 834, 849, 857
Governor—556–557, 559, 562, 580
Hurricane Sandy, damage and recovery efforts—560
National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown—579–581
New York City
InterContinental New York Barclay hotel—849
InterContinental New York Times Square hotel—849, 857
National September 11 Memorial & Museum—562–563, 849
President's visits—237, 391, 556, 559, 562, 579, 610, 744, 834, 841–842, 849–852, 857
U.S. Military Academy at West Point—610, 852

New York—Continued
U.S. Representative, retirement—8, 24
Washington Irving Boat Club in Tarrytown—556
New Yorker magazine—821
New Zealand
Earthquake, damage and recovery efforts—762
Prime Minister—762, 821, 850
Relations with U.S.—762–763, 821
Security cooperation with U.S.—762–763
Niger, U.S. military detachment—715
Nigeria
Boko Haram terrorist group—849
Centenary Celebration—831
Kidnapping of girls by Boko Haram terrorist group—532–533, 579, 616, 658, 675, 716, 849
U.S. assistance—616
North American Leaders' Summit—148, 150–155, 157–158, 822, 830
North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization, Council of the—842
North Atlantic Treaty Organization—210, 255, 263, 277, 291–292, 306, 309–311, 319, 321, 323, 329, 334, 408, 506, 603–604, 614, 636–640, 642–643, 647–648, 652, 659, 717, 834, 838
North Carolina
Disaster assistance—839
Governor—24
North Carolina State University in Raleigh—24–25
President's visit—24, 822–823
U.S. Representative, retirement—8
Vacon Inc. research facility in Durham—823
North Dakota
Governor—855
President's visit—720, 855–856
Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in Cannon Ball—720
North Korea
China, role—425
Human rights issues—105, 441, 674
International diplomatic efforts—299, 318, 425, 445–446, 657
International sanctions—674
Japanese citizens, abductions—844
Nuclear weapons development—278, 299, 318, 419, 422, 425, 432, 441, 445–446, 452–453, 657, 674, 709, 762, 764
Relations with South Korea—441
U.S. national emergency continuation—764
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission—857
Northern Ireland. *See* United Kingdom
NPR, "Morning Edition" program—852
Nuclear energy. *See* Energy; *specific country*
Nuclear Regulatory Commission, U.S.—288
Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board—856
Nuclear weapons. *See* Arms and munitions; *specific country*

Office. *See other part of subject*
Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission—851
Oklahoma
Disaster assistance—826
Failed lethal injection incident in McAlester—512
Governor—171–173, 450, 830
Tornadoes, damage and recovery efforts—172
U.S. Senator, retirement—53
Olympic games. *See* Sports; *specific country*
Open Government Partnership—155
Oregon
Disaster assistance—841
Governor—174, 830
Organizing for Action—180, 184–185

Pacific Halibut Commission, International—821
Pakistan
Ambassador to U.S.—834
Reconciliation efforts—823
Palestinian Authority and Palestinians
See also Middle East
President—256, 444, 832, 836
Panama, President—858
Papua New Guinea, Ambassador to U.S.—834
Parade magazine—850
Paraguay, U.S. Ambassador—853
Pennsylvania
Community College of Allegheny County North Campus in North Fayette Township—400–403, 843
Disaster assistance—827
President's visits—76, 400, 729, 825, 843, 856–857
Stabbing in Murrysville—841–842
TechShop Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh—729–730, 857
U.S. Steel Corp. Mon Valley Works Irvin Plant in West Mifflin—76–77, 825
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation—835, 838
People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, Committee for Purchase From—857
People With Intellectual Disabilities, President's Committee for—857
Peru, Ambassador to U.S.—523
Philippines
Defense relationship with U.S.—499
Economic growth and development—488
Manila
Malacanang Palace—846
Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel—846
Maritime territorial dispute with China—488–489, 492
President—485, 496, 498–499, 846
President Obama's visit—485, 487, 496, 498, 828, 846

Philippines—Continued
Relations with U.S.—487–489, 497–498, 500
Security cooperation with U.S.—488–489, 493
Taguig
American Manila Cemetery—846
Fort Bonifacio—498, 846
Trade with U.S.—488
Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda), damage and recovery efforts—71, 422
U.S. assistance—488, 497, 499–500
U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—846
Vice President—498
Poland
Defense relationship with U.S.—637–639, 642, 652
Economic growth and development—646, 651
Freedom Day, 25th anniversary—650–652, 853
Polish and U.S. military personnel, meeting with President Obama—853
President—637, 647–648, 650–651, 832, 853
President Obama's visit—636–637, 645, 648, 650, 846, 853
Prime Minister—645, 650
Relations with U.S.—637–639, 646–647, 650
Taxation convention with U.S.—571
U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—853
Warsaw
Belweder Palace—853
Koniecpolski Palace—853
Royal Castle—853
Warsaw Chopin Airport—636, 853
Warsaw Marriott Hotel—853
Postal Service, U.S.—829
Prayer Breakfast, National—102, 105
Presidency, U.S., State of the Union Address—62, 72–73, 87, 91, 95, 824, 826
President. *See other part of subject*
Presidential Scholars, Commission on—835, 844
Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board—41, 51, 821
Promise Zones initiative—8, 11–13
Public Broadcasting, Corporation for—835, 838
Puerto Rico
Governor—688
Resident Commissioner—688

Qatar
Ambassador to U.S.—834
Amir—632, 852
Former Amir—852
U.S. Ambassador—847
U.S. Guantanamo Bay Naval Station detainees, transfer to Qatari custody—632, 641, 852

Religious Freedom, U.S. Commission on International—849
Religious leaders, meetings with President—834, 843
Reserve System, Federal—2, 822
Rhode Island, Governor—217–218, 220, 234, 313, 833
Roman Catholic Church. *See* Holy See (Vatican City)
Russia
2014 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sochi—71, 112, 150, 186, 200, 277, 356, 824, 827–830, 838
Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, U.S. withdrawal of designation as beneficiary country—528
International and U.S. sanctions—428, 845
International diplomatic efforts—263–264, 277, 283, 289–292, 305–306, 310, 323–324, 329, 336, 408–409, 411, 425, 427–428, 432, 443, 448, 454, 460–461, 490, 493, 506–509, 614, 639, 644, 649, 655, 659, 662, 666, 673, 709, 836, 839, 842–843, 845
Military equipment purchase from France—662
Minister of Foreign Affairs—240
Nuclear weapons and material, risk of proliferation—761
President—162, 200, 211, 213–214, 240, 242, 255, 263, 288–289, 409, 411, 428, 447–448, 461, 490, 509–511, 517, 644–645, 649, 662–664, 666, 824, 830, 832–833, 835, 839, 842, 854, 858
Relations with NATO—640
Relations with Ukraine—210–211, 215, 226, 240–242, 254–255, 263–264, 277, 283–284, 289, 291–292, 295, 305–306, 310–311, 314, 322–325, 333, 336, 355, 408, 411, 422, 425, 432, 443, 447–448, 454, 461, 490, 493, 506–511, 596, 614, 639–640, 644, 648–649, 652–654, 658, 662, 664, 673, 832–833, 835–836, 839, 841–843, 845, 854
Relations with U.S.—162–163, 255, 324, 447, 640, 644, 824
Security cooperation with U.S.—827
Syria, role—119
Trade with U.S.—528
U.S. national emergency, continuation—761
World Trade Organization, accession—325
Rwanda
Genocide, 20th anniversary—367
U.S. Ambassador—856

Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation—846–847
Saudi Arabia
King—839
President Obama's visit—339, 826, 838–839
Ritz-Carlton, Riyadh hotel in Riyadh—839
U.S. Ambassador—839
U.S. Embassy personnel, meeting with President Obama—839
Women, status—339

Science, President's Committee on the National Medal of—842
Science and technology
See also Health and medical care
Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, Presidential—842
International cooperation—484
Public-private partnerships—100
Research and development—53, 65, 92, 147, 315, 535, 561, 569, 707, 730–732, 748–749, 784, 791
Robotics—748–749
Science Foundation, National—747, 856
Security Agency, National—38, 40–41, 43, 121, 290, 512
Senate Youth Program, U.S., student delegates, meeting with President—835
Sentencing Commission, U.S.—855
Sexual Assault, White House Task Force To Protect Students From—58, 61
Shriver Report, "A Woman's Nation Pushes Back From the Brink"—822
Slovenia, U.S. Ambassador—856
Small Business Administration—28, 338, 371, 549
Smithsonian Institution, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts—96, 831, 835
Social Security Administration—858
Social Security and retirement
Social Security program—7
Treasury savings account—68, 79, 108, 111, 130, 135, 144, 173
Somalia
African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM)—520, 522
Piracy—320, 522
U.S. military detachment—715
U.S. national emergency, continuation—373
South Africa
President—851
Presidential election—851
South America
Democracy efforts—16
Economic growth and development—16
South Carolina, disaster assistance—829, 835
South Dakota, Governor—855
South Korea
Cultural artifacts, repatriation from U.S.—438
Defense relationship with U.S.—441, 450–453
Free trade agreement with U.S.—299, 427, 441, 450
President—299, 437–439, 450, 452, 845
President Obama's visit—436–439, 450–451, 828, 845
Relations with Japan—446
Relations with North Korea—441
Relations with U.S.—299–300, 406, 413, 438, 441–442, 451
South Korea—Continued
Seoul
Blue House—845
Grand Hyatt Seoul hotel—845
Gyeongbokgung Palace—845
U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan—451, 845
War Memorial of Korea—436, 845
Sewol ferry, sinking—406, 413, 437–438, 441, 452
U.S. Ambassador—436, 451–452, 847
South Sudan
Democracy efforts—361
Human rights issues—104, 361
Political unrest and violence—60–61, 361, 763
Relations with U.S.—61
U.S. military detachment—298, 717
U.S. sanctions—361–362
Space program
Aeronautics and Space Administration, National—605
Mars exploration—98
Space Station, International—429, 472, 844
Spain
Crown Prince—857
Defense relationship with U.S.—15
Financial markets, stabilization efforts—15
Former President—839
King—760, 857
Prime Minister—15, 834
Relations with U.S.—15–16, 760, 857
Taxation convention with U.S.—527
U.S. Ambassador—856
Sports
2012–2013 NCAA champion student athletes—834
Auto racing—774, 858
Baseball—339, 341, 582, 758, 837
Basketball—22, 265, 348, 461, 685, 711, 821, 829, 843, 853–854, 858
Concussions and related injuries—618–620
Football—414, 575, 822, 826–827, 830, 849
Golf—773
Hockey—187, 858
NCAA championship teams—234–235, 685, 853
Olympic Games—71, 112, 150, 186, 200, 277, 356, 358, 827, 829–830, 838
Paralympic Games—356, 358, 828, 838
Rugby—250
Soccer—16, 855
World Cup—779, 805
Standards and Technology, National Institute of—133
State, Department of
Ambassadors. *See specific country*
Cultural Heritage Center—830
Deputy Secretary—395
Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, Special Adviser to the Secretary on—104
Foreign Missions, Office of—847

State, Department of—Continued
International Women of Courage Award—339
Secretary—51, 104, 119, 160, 209, 211, 213–214, 226, 240, 256, 423, 444, 752, 807, 817, 821, 827, 836, 838–839, 841, 848, 854, 857
Southeast Asian Nations, Association of, U.S. Representative—823
U.S. Government Activities To Combat HIV/AIDS Globally, Ambassador at Large and Coordinator—822
Sudan, human rights issues—104
Supreme Court. *See* Judiciary
Switzerland, U.S. Ambassador—826
Syria
Chemical weapons stockpile, international removal efforts—673, 858
Civil war and sectarian conflict—15, 70, 115, 119, 141, 208, 277, 292, 302, 305, 316–317, 325, 329, 424, 447, 474, 476, 493, 506, 526, 532–533, 611, 613, 655, 673–674, 709, 718, 754–755, 757, 763, 823–824, 830, 837, 849–850
Democracy efforts—162, 526
Human rights issues—673
International assistance—655, 673
International diplomatic efforts—119–120, 613, 655
Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist organization—755
National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces—849
Political unrest and violence—141
President—119, 141, 163, 447, 476, 527, 613, 655, 673, 719, 754–755
Presidential election—673
Russia, role—162
United Nations, role—141
U.S. assistance—119
U.S. national emergency, continuation—526–527

Taiwan, nuclear energy, cooperation with U.S.—5–7
Taxation
Earned-income tax credit—7, 68, 212, 217
Tax Code, reform—64, 68, 79, 83, 92, 188, 212–213, 558, 561, 564, 566, 569, 586, 740, 792, 805
Tennessee
Former U.S. Senator, death—794
McGavock High School in Nashville—86–87, 89, 825
President's visit—86, 825
Terrorism
See also Defense and national security; *specific country or region*
Al Qaida terrorist group—70, 521, 598–599, 603–605, 610, 612–613, 714–715
Al-Shabaab terrorist group—520–522, 715
Boko Haram terrorist group—616, 658, 675
Terrorism—Continued
Counterterrorism efforts—31–32, 39–40, 43–44, 48, 54, 70, 209, 290, 521–522, 553, 599, 604, 612–613, 659, 675, 714, 718, 741, 755, 795
Global threat—15, 33, 38–39, 54, 70, 122, 154, 316, 612, 675, 711
September 11, 2001, attacks—38, 43, 562–563, 596, 598, 600, 603, 610, 612
Terrorists, interrogation procedures—39, 244–245
Transfer of detainees at Guantanamo Bay—632, 641, 852
Texas
Democratic Party events—379, 841
KBXX's "Madd Hatta Morning Show" in Houston—827
KDFW in Dallas—836
Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in Austin—382, 841
President's visit—377, 379, 382, 841
Shooting at Fort Hood—353–354, 358, 377–380, 840
Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program, Tunisian students, meeting with President—841
Tibet, Dalai Lama—830
TNT, "Inside the NBA" program—829
Trade. *See* Business and industry; Commerce, international
Trade agreements or negotiations. *See* Commerce, international; *specific country or region*
Trade Commission, U.S. International—744
Trade Representative, Office of the U.S.—450, 751, 831
Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)—148, 153, 157, 162, 422, 426–427, 433, 442, 451, 458, 462, 467–469, 477, 482, 485, 488, 506, 709, 751, 762
Transportation
Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts—54, 64, 92, 157, 187–189, 207, 238, 412, 557–559, 561, 564, 566, 569, 629, 687, 707, 725, 740, 797, 805
Mass transit and rail infrastructure, improvement efforts—188–189
Transportation, Department of
Deputy Secretary—849
Policy, Under Secretary for—849
Secretary—146, 186, 189, 556, 558, 831
Transportation Safety Board, National—859
Treasury, Department of the
Financial Capability for Young Americans, President's Advisory Council on—831–832, 835, 838
Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board—838
International Affairs, Under Secretary for—829
International Finance, Assistant Secretary for—842
Secretary—76, 79–80, 144, 822, 824, 827, 832, 835–836, 841, 843, 849, 852
Tumblr—689

Tunisia
Ambassador to U.S.—834
Counterterrorism efforts, cooperation with U.S.—362, 365
Democracy efforts—317, 362, 364, 826
Economic growth and development—364
Minister of Foreign Affairs—365
Prime Minister—362, 364, 826, 836, 841
Relations with U.S.—364–365, 826
Student exchanges with U.S.—363, 365
Trade with U.S.—364
U.S. assistance—362
Turkey
Coal mine accident in Soma—849
President—849
Prime Minister—830
Relations with Armenia—431
Relations with U.S.—830
U.S. Ambassador—853
Turkmenistan, U.S. Ambassador—853

Uganda
Human rights issues—143
Lord's Resistance Army insurgent group—298
President—143
U.S. military detachment—298
Ukraine
Chernobyl nuclear site, remediation efforts—655, 673
Crimea, succession referendum—241
Democracy efforts—158, 162–163, 199–200, 208, 210–211, 213–215, 226–227, 239–243, 248, 255, 263–264, 289, 314, 322–325, 328, 333, 408, 425, 428, 443, 454, 461, 490, 507, 510–511, 595, 639–640, 644, 649, 653–654, 658, 672, 832–833, 837, 839, 849, 852
Economic growth and development—649, 672, 832
Energy sources, diversification efforts—649
International assistance—211, 284, 290, 305, 328, 333, 506, 508, 644, 647, 654, 672
International diplomatic efforts—200, 208, 210–211, 213–214, 226, 242, 255, 845
Minister of Foreign Affairs—408
Nuclear material, safe disposal, cooperation with U.S.—288, 295
Political unrest and violence—148, 158, 163, 199, 208, 210, 213, 215, 225–227, 242, 248, 254–255, 263, 278, 283–284, 288, 305, 309, 311, 314, 322, 325, 328, 355, 411, 427, 443, 447, 454, 460, 490, 493, 506, 508, 511, 532, 595–596, 611, 614, 637, 639, 642, 644, 647, 649, 654, 658, 662, 666, 668, 709, 830, 832–837, 840–843, 845, 849, 854, 856, 858
President—158, 163
President-elect—614, 639–640, 644, 648, 653–654, 658, 662, 664, 672, 852, 854
Presidential election—595, 673
Ukraine—Continued
Prime Minister—200, 239, 255, 289, 294, 333, 834
Relations with Europe—448
Relations with Russia—211, 242, 448, 649, 662, 672
Relations with U.S.—644, 839
Russia, role—162, 200, 208, 210–211, 213–215, 226, 240–242, 248, 254–255, 263–264, 277, 283–284, 289, 291–292, 295, 305–306, 310–311, 314, 322–325, 333, 336, 355, 408, 411, 422, 425, 428, 432, 443, 447–448, 454, 461, 490, 493, 506–511, 596, 614, 639–640, 644, 648–649, 652–654, 658, 664, 672–673, 832–833, 835–836, 839, 842–843, 845, 854
U.S. assistance—213, 226, 240, 263, 408, 649, 852
U.S. sanctions—226–227, 254–255, 263–264, 836
United Arab Emirates
Abu Dhabi, Crown Prince—832, 837
Armed Forces, Deputy Supreme Commander—832, 837
Relations with U.S.—832
United Farm Workers—261
United Kingdom
European Union, membership status—664
Northern Ireland
Peace efforts—823
Relations with Ireland—249, 251
Prime Minister—408, 644, 658, 823, 832–834, 843, 845, 854, 858
Relations with U.S.—658–659, 664
Scotland, independence referendum—664
United Nations
Framework Convention on Climate Change—116, 154, 434, 615, 647, 670
Libya, U.N. Support Mission in—674
Mali, U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in—656, 674
Millennium Development Goals—319, 670
Peacekeeping operations—614
Secretary General—452
Security Council—140
U.N. representatives, U.S. visa policy—415
U.S. Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs—856
Uruguay
Educational exchanges with U.S.—546
President—545, 843
Relations with U.S.—546
U.S. *See other part of subject*
USAID. *See* Development, U.S. Agency for International
Utah, Governor—830, 855

Vatican. *See* Holy See (Vatican City)
Venezuela, political unrest and violence—158

Vermont
Disaster assistance—825, 855
Governor—166, 168, 217–218, 220, 234, 313, 833
Severe flooding, damage and recovery efforts—855
Veterans
Benefits—53, 71, 494, 556, 572–574, 595, 605, 622–623
Disabled veterans—572, 575, 622–623
Health and medical care—378, 494, 571–575, 595, 600, 621–625, 811–812, 850
Hiring incentives—64, 600
Homelessness—575, 621–623, 812
Job training and education assistance—403, 573, 575, 600, 621, 811–812
Meetings with President—854
Service and dedication—499–500, 594, 622, 830
Unemployment and underemployment—573
Veterans Affairs, Department of
Acting Secretary—859
Chief Financial Officer—812
Deputy Secretary—809–811, 852
Funding—494, 623, 625
Health and medical care system, funding—572
Health, Under Secretary for—847
Homelessness, assistance and mitigation efforts—572, 575
Inspector General—572–573, 575
Policy, Assistant Secretary for—812
Secretary—405, 494, 571, 574–575, 621, 809, 850, 852
Secretary-designate—860
Veterans Health Administration—572–575, 621–622, 624–625, 792, 810–811
Veterans' Appeals, Board of—812
Veterans of Foreign Wars—841
Vice President. *See* White House Office
Vietnam
Nuclear energy, cooperation with U.S.—536–538
Relations with U.S.—467
U.S. Ambassador—849
Virginia
Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington—600–601, 852
Democratic Party events—215
FireFlies restaurant in Alexandria—855
Governor—168
Great Falls National Park in McLean—859
Monticello in Charlottesville—112, 828
President's visits—112, 215, 600, 827–828, 833, 852, 855, 859
U.S. Representative, retirement—30
Voluntarism—235, 686, 712, 824

Washington
Disaster assistance—287, 837, 840
Governor—170, 174, 287, 417, 830, 844
Washington—Continued
Oso
Mudslide, damage and recovery efforts—287, 417–418, 837, 844
Oso Community Chapel—844
President's visit—417, 844
Snohomish County Fire District 25/Oso Fire Department Firehouse in Arlington—417–418, 844
Washington, DC. *See* District of Columbia
Weapons of mass destruction. *See* Arms and munitions
"Weather From the White House" program—848
WebMD Health Corp.—835
West Virginia, disaster assistance—822
Western Hemisphere
See also Caribbean Nations; Central America; Commerce, international; Developing countries; South America
Energy and climate, regional cooperation—158
Whaling Commission, International—345–346
White House Correspondents' Association—515–516, 518–519
White House Fellowships, President's Commission on—826, 850
White House Healthy Kids & Safe Sports Concussion Summit—607, 617
White House Maker Faire—731–732, 747, 751, 857
White House Office
Assistants to the President
AIDS Policy, Office of National, Director—837
Cabinet Secretary—19, 626–627, 825
Chief of Staff—836, 855
Chief of Staff, Adviser to—839
Chief of Staff, Deputy—837
Chief of Staff for Policy, Deputy—571–572, 621–622, 624, 810, 840, 850, 852, 859
Chief Photographer—339
Communications, Deputy Director—825
Counselor—45, 850
Health Policy, Deputy Assistant for—839
Homeland Security and Counterterrorism—840, 853
Legislative Affairs, Deputy—825
Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf Region, White House Coordinator for the—838–839
National Security Adviser—48–49, 52, 836, 838–840, 844, 846, 849, 854, 856–857
National Security Adviser, Deputy—836
National Security Adviser for International Economics, Deputy—450
National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications, Deputy—226, 824, 836
Personal Secretary—723
Political Strategy and Outreach, Director—825
Press Secretary—225–226, 256, 340, 627
Public Engagement, Deputy Director—261

White House Office—Continued
Assistants to the President—Continued
Public Engagement, Principal Deputy Director—839
Science and Technology Policy—605, 747, 777
Senate Liaison—825
Senior Adviser—56, 348, 824, 839, 854
Senior Communications Adviser—838–839
Speechwriting, Director—824
Trip Director—821
Economic Advisers, Council of—853
Economic Council, National—34, 570, 836
Export Council, President's—750–751
Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Office of—103
Interns—843
"My Brother's Keeper" initiative—190–195, 398, 626–627, 722, 764, 828, 831–832
Puerto Rico, President's Task Force on—688
Science and Technology Policy, White House Office of—785
Security Council, National—717, 855, 857
Vice President—56–57, 59–60, 62, 66, 84, 94–95, 102, 163, 172, 220, 234, 249–250, 255, 263, 372, 400–402, 404–405, 547, 549, 557, 564–565, 599–600, 627, 710, 773, 807, 809, 817, 821–832, 835, 839–843, 846–850, 852, 855, 858, 860
Women and Girls, White House Council on—56, 824
White House Science Fair—45, 605–606, 851–852
White House Student Film Festival—197, 831
White House Summit on Working Families—722, 733, 765–766, 858
Wisconsin
General Electric Co. gas engines plant in Waukesha—82, 84, 825
President's visit—82, 825
World Bank—452, 828
World Health Organization—671
World Trade Organization—314–315, 482, 668
Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride—405–406
Wyoming, Governor—831, 855

Yemen
Counterterrorism efforts, cooperation with U.S.—825
Democracy efforts—550, 755, 825
President—755, 825
Relations with U.S.—825
Security cooperation with U.S.—715, 755
Suspected terrorist safe havens—715
U.S. Ambassador—823
U.S. national emergency, continuation—550

Zimbabwe, U.S. national emergency, continuation—206

Name Index

Aaron, Henry J.—864
Abbas, Mahmoud—209, 256, 444, 832, 836
Abbott, Anthony J.—708, 846
Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King—839
Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, King—454, 458, 466, 845
Abdul Rashid bin Md Isa—845
Abdullah, Abdullah—604
Abdullah II, King—140, 825, 828–829, 850
Abe, Akie—431
Abe, Shinzo—280, 299, 419–420, 430–431, 435–436, 446, 833, 837, 844
Abedi, Mohamad—727
Abedini, Jacob—105
Abedini, Naghmeh—105
Abedini, Rebekka—105
Abedini, Saeed—105
Abele, Chris—82
Abercrombie, Neil—170, 502
Abrams, Leslie J.—835, 879
Abu-Jamal, Mumia—223
Adams, William D. "Bro"—842, 880
Adegbile, Debo P.—223, 864
Adler, Leah—531
Adler, Robert S.—849, 882
Admati, Anat—857
Aguilar, Gustavo V.—875
Ahmad, N. Nina—845
Aiken, Matt—414
Akers, Michelle—855
Akihito, Emperor—421, 431, 844–845
Akuetteh, Cynthia H.—864
Al Kuwari, Mohammed Jaham A.A.—834
Al Muneef, Maha—339
Albino, James—688
Albrecht, Sky—632
Alcocer Martinez de Castro, Sergio M.—523
Alexander, Paige E.—874
Allen, Paul G.—576–577
Allen, Ray—23
Allen, Teressa—72, 74
Altman, Sam—538
Alverson, Robert D.—821
Andersen, Chris "Birdman"—23
Anderson, Aaron—728
Anderson, Anne—250
Anderson, Jamie L.—516
Anderson, John—856
Andolino, Rosemarie S.—582
André, Larry E., Jr.—864
Andrés Puerta, José Ramón—523
Andrews, Bruce H.—851, 882
Andrews, Camille Spinello—100
Andrews, Jacqueline—100
Andrews, Josie—100
Andrews, Robert E.—100
Angelou, Maya—617
Anthony, Steven J.—864
Apalisok, George—499–500
Aponte, Mari del Carmen—850
Aquino, Benigno S., III—485, 496, 498–499, 846
Archambault, Dave, II—720
Arleo, Madeline Cox—859, 884
Arnwine, Barbara R.—391
Arredondo, Carlos—399
Arroyo, David J.—864
Artis, Sheila—501
Asad, Bashar al- —119, 141, 163, 447, 476, 527, 613, 655, 673, 719, 754–755
Ashford, Tamara W.—864
Ashton, Catherine—656, 674
Athey, Susan—833
Atkinson, Caroline M.—450
Audibert, Jacques—854
Augustus, Seimone—712
Aung San Suu Kyi—475
Auriemma, Geno—685–686, 843
Axelrod, David M.—840
Axelrod, Susan—857
Ayalde, Liliana—855, 859

Bachelet Jeria, Michelle—805, 834, 848
Badila, Nicolas—608
Bae, Kenneth—105
Baer, Daniel B.—854
Bains, Leslie E.—864
Baker, Howard H., Jr.—794
Baker, Jeffery C.—597
Baker, Rushern L., III—96, 367
Baldwin, Douglas D.—576
Ball, Helen—554
Ballentine, Miranda A.A.—825, 876
Balsera, Alfredo J.—864–865
Balsiger, James W.—821
Ban Ki-moon—452
Banks, Sedrick—405–406
Baquero, Cassandra—606
Barbee, Kevin—87, 825
Barber, Robert C.—865
Bard, Allen J.—826
Barkley, Charles—829

Barnell, Aaron—801
Barra, Mary T.—64
Barrett, Thomas M.—82, 83
Barron, David J.—861
Barros, Francisco de Fatima Frederico—629
Barroso, José Manuel Durão—303, 331, 837, 853
Barton, Joseph L.—203, 221, 351, 501
Bashant, Cynthia A.—862
Bass, Daisjaughn—608
Bass, John R.—853, 883
Bass, Karen R.—839
Bassett, Leslie A.—853, 883
Bastian, Stanley A.—862
Batta, Todd A.—828, 877
Battier, Shane—23
Batts, Deborah A.—745, 813
Baucus, Max S.—874
Bauer, Robert F.—56, 69, 393
Bauman, Jeff, Jr.—399
Bay, Norman C.—826, 876
Beachy, Roger N.—856
Beatty, Camille—749–750
Beatty, Genevieve—749–750
Beatty, Joyce H.—619
Beaudreau, Tommy P.—865, 882
Becerra, Xavier—134, 835, 842
Beck, Theodore J.—832
Becker, Ralph E., Jr.—60
Beebe, Michael D.—174, 525–526, 846, 848
Beecroft, Robert S.—848, 881
Beetlestone, Wendy—856
Beilein, John—348
Bell, Colleen Bradley—865
Bell, Derrick—748
Bell, William V.—24
Bellucci, Gigi—617
Bellucci, Victoria "Tori"—617–620
Bennet, Anne—237
Bennet, Caroline—237
Bennet, Halina—237
Bennet, Michael F.—215–217, 237, 239, 528, 560, 562, 585–586, 588, 706
Bennet, Susan D.—237
Bennett, David M.—865
Bennett, Michael, Jr.—576
Bentley, Arthur L., III—858, 883
Bentley, Robert J.—173
Bergdahl, Bowe R.—631–632, 641, 664–665, 852–853
Bergdahl, Jani—631–633, 665, 853
Bergdahl, Robert—631–633, 665, 853
Bernicat, Marcia Stephens Bloom—851, 882
Berns, Peter V.—848
Berra, Lawrence P. "Yogi"—582
Berzins, Andris—834
Beshear, Steven L.—69
Bhuva, Shimul—766
Biden, Jill T.—64, 174, 400, 405, 573, 599–601, 812, 852
Biden, Joseph R., Jr.—56–57, 59–60, 62, 66, 84, 94–95, 102, 163, 172, 200, 220, 234, 249–250, 255, 263, 372, 400–402, 404–405, 547, 549, 557, 564–565, 599–600, 627, 710, 773, 807, 809, 817–818, 821–832, 834–835, 839–843, 846–850, 852, 854–855, 858, 860
Biggs, Heidi Neel—821, 874
Bilbrey, John P.—859
Binay, Jejomar Cabaiatam—498
Bingaman, Jesse F. "Jeff"—578
Biniaz, Celina—531
Birk, Robin E.—80
Birotte, André, Jr.—840, 879
Birx, Deborah L.—822, 875
Bishop, Timothy H.—619
Black, Sherry Salway—832
Blackford, Paul—843
Blackmun, Scott—358
Blackwell, Angela Glover—823
Blair, Bonnie—829
Blanchard, Melinda M.—705
Blank, Rebecca M.—82
Blankinship, Gary—863
Blinder, Alan S.—857
Blinken, Antony J.—836
Blitzstein, David S.—838
Bloom, Beth—827, 877
Bloomberg, Michael R.—193, 562, 849
Blumenthal, Gary—836
Blumenthal, Richard—688
Blunt, Roy A.—176
Boatright, Ryan—686
Boehner, John A.—62, 64, 205, 238, 505, 517, 552, 590, 707, 773, 807, 808, 817, 831, 840, 857
Bogaerts, Xander—340
Boggs, Michael P.—863
Boitano, Brian A.—827
Bolden, Charles F., Jr.—605
Bolden, Victor A.—856
Bolduan, Kate—859
Bolsinger, Lorraine—825
Bond, Julian—383
Bonilla, Armando O.—850, 882
Bonn, Brook—608
Boone, Melinda J.—703
Borin, Howard Z.—844
Boroff, Austen—610
Bosh, Chris—23
Bough, Stephen R.—823, 875
Boulware, Richard F., II—823, 875
Bova, Patrick—813
Bowen, Sharon Y.—874
Bowman, Barbara T.—823
Boxer, Barbara—138, 236, 687, 829

Boyd, Gwendolyn E.—823
Bozek, Megan—235
Brainard, Lael—822, 875
Brainerd, Michael E.—600
Braitmayer, Karen L.—840
Brandt, Jack M.—848
Brazile, Donna—205
Breen, Susan—262
Brennan, John O.—245
Brett, James T.—857
Brewer, Janice K.—830, 855
Bridge, Anthony R.—825
Broadbent, Meredith M.—744
Broas, Timothy M.—865
Brooks, Douglas M.—837
Brooks, Timothy L.—861
Brothers, L. Reginald, Jr.—826, 876
Brown, Clayola—391
Brown, Corinne—271
Brown, Dustin—858
Brown, Edmund G. "Jerry," Jr.—137–140, 168, 174, 825
Brown, Roger—12–13
Brown, Sherrod—176
Browner, Carol M.—775
Brundage, Amy J.—825
Bruno, Alice A.—217
Brunson, Rebekkah—712
Bryant, John H.—832
Bryant, Joseph A. "Red"—576
Brynjolfsson, Erik—857
Brzezinski, Mika—859
Buchanan, Jeffrey S.—600
Buchanan, Patrick J.—517
Buckhorn, Robert F.—60
Bullock, Quintin B.—400
Bullock, Steve—855
Bumphus, Walter G.—823
Bundy, Cliven—516
Burke, Thomas A.—865
Burns, Ursula M.—94
Burns, William J.—365, 395, 829
Burwell, Helene—389
Burwell, Mathew—389
Burwell, Stephen—389
Burwell, Sylvia Mathews—53, 387, 591, 667, 858, 880
Bush, Barbara—1
Bush, Dwight L., Sr.—865
Bush, George H.W.—262, 415, 726, 841
Bush, George W.—223, 518
Bush, Mike—836
Butts, Cassandra Q.—828, 877
Bycel, Lee T.—842
Byrd, Antonio—564
Byron, Kari—605
Byron, Paul G.—827, 877
Byun, Michael—845

Cacioppo, John T.—833
Cahall, Pete—815
Cahow, Caitlin—827, 851
Caldwell, Leslie Ragon—865
Cameron, David—408, 644, 658, 823, 832–834, 843, 845, 854, 858
Campbell, Melanie L.—391
Campos, Nora—538
Canada, Geoffrey—8, 10–11
Cancian, Maria—828, 877
Canegallo, Kristie A.—839
Cannon, Patrick D.—836
Cantor, Eric I.—409, 517, 843
Cantwell, Maria E.—417, 844
Capone, Kenneth—848
Cardenaz, Macarena E.—601
Cardenaz, Marianna—601
Cardenaz, Mariella—601
Cardenaz, Mariliz—601
Cardin, Benjamin L.—72
Carey, Dan—29
Carey, Deborah—29
Carlin, John P.—865
Carlson, Gregory M.—705
Carnes, Julie E.—861
Carney, Chris—405
Carney, Della C.—627
Carney, Hugo J.—627
Carney, James F. "Jay"—225–226, 256, 340, 518, 627
Carpenter, Jim—758, 760
Carpenter, Kyle W.—812
Carpenter, Peyton—758, 760
Carpenter, Price—758, 760
Carpenter, Robin—758, 760
Carpenter, W. Kyle—757, 812, 850, 855
Carrillo, Deidre—608
Carroll, Michael G.—865
Carroll, Peter C.—576–577, 826
Carson, Brad R.—865
Carson, Jon—184
Carter, Graduel C.D.—576
Carter, Taliya—748
Carty, Lisa—395
Carvalho, Alberto M.—229, 231, 233
Casey, Robert P., Jr.—76, 400–401, 403, 731
Casey, Sean—104, 343–344
Caslen, Robert L., Jr.—610, 852
Castro, Carina V.—592
Castro, Erica Lira—592
Castro, Joaquin—592
Castro, Julián—60, 591
Catherine, Anaya—836

Cedillo-Martin, Melvin—678–679
Chacon, Arnold A.—865
Chafee, Lincoln D.—217–218, 220, 234, 313, 833
Chalmers, Mario—23
Champagne, Christian—190
Chancellor, Kameron D.—576
Chandler, Vicki—856
Chaudhary, Ravi—845
Chávez, Anna Maria—832
Chavez, Paul F.—261
Chelaifa, Mhamed Ezzine—834
Chen, Eric—608
Chen, Jane M.—749
Chen, Lanhee J.—865
Cheun, Lian—845
Chhabria, Vince Girdhari—862
Childress, Mark B.—865
Chin, Kathy Ko—845
Chin, Tessanne—228
Chiovoloni, Robert P.—217
Chochran, W. Thad—108
Choi Yun-hee—452
Christie, Christopher J.—168, 170, 517, 562
Christman, Richard—823, 875
Chu, R. Jane—829, 877
Chuang, Theodore D.—863
Chute, Nick—68
Chutkan, Tanya S.—863
Cisneros, José—831
Clapper, James R., Jr.—42, 44
Clark, Chris—542
Clark, Julia A.—829, 877
Clark, Michelle Sadrena—531
Clark, Sue—856
Clarke, Richard D.—610
Clement, Paul D.—223
Clinton, Hillary Rodham—516, 518, 849, 852
Clinton, William J.—206, 516
Clyburn, James E.—134, 683
Cnossen, Dan—357, 359
Coburn, Carolyn—53
Coburn, Thomas A.—53, 102
Coghlin, Edwin "Ted"—702–704
Cohen, Alan L.—865
Cohen, Mark H.—863
Cohen, Stephen—87
Cohen, Steven H.—840, 879
Cole, James, Jr.—865
Coleman, Christopher B.—186, 711, 780
Coleman, Derrick L.—576
Coleman, Dian—634
Coleman, Mary Sue—347, 350
Coleman, William—850
Collins, Anthony G.—846, 880
Collins, Francis S.—605, 618, 747
Collins, Jason—845
Coloretti, Nani A.—833, 865, 878
Colvin, Carolyn Watts—858, 884
Colwell, Wilson "Bill"—678
Comer, James P.—823
Conner, Sean—843
Connor, Michael L.—138, 865
Contreras-Sweet, Maria—28, 338, 371, 850, 875
Conyers, John, Jr.—348, 353
Cook, Elisebeth Collins—865
Cooper, Christopher R.—862
Cooper, James H.S.—87
Copeland, Misty—845
Corbat, Michael L.—838
Cordova, Celestino—688
Cordova, France A.—747, 866
Cormack, Maureen E.—866
Corporon, William L.—397, 399
Costa, Gregg J.—861
Costa, Jim—137–138, 829
Costas, Bob—827
Costos, James—839, 856
Couples, Fred—773
Courtney, Joe—218
Cowan, William M. "Mo"—706
Cox, Laverne—814
Crabtree, Daniel D.—862
Cramer, Kevin—720
Crawford, Geoffrey W.—850, 882
Crawford, Stephen—866
Creedon, Madelyn R.—866
Crider, Tyrone—393
Crist, Charles J., Jr.—230
Crocker, Bathsheba N.—866
Croley, Steven—851, 866
Crowell, Laurie McCann—859
Crowley, Joseph—134
Crowther, Alison—563
Cruden, John C.—874
Crutchfield, Barbara—180
Crutchfield, Eric—180
Crutchfield, Joshua—180, 182
Cruz, Andres—822
Cruz, R. Edward "Ted"—517
Cummings, Elijah E.—567
Cunningham, James B.—596–598, 603, 851
Cuomo, Andrew M.—556–557, 559, 562, 580

Dacey, Amy—200
Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso—830
Dalrymple, John S., III—720, 855
Daly, Deirdre M.—835, 879
Daniels, Deandre—686
Dantonio, Mark—107
Darby, Jim—813

Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim—464
Daugaard, Dennis M.—855
Daughton, Thomas F.—866
Davenport, Judith M.—835, 879
Davis, Guy—713
Davis, Lucia—192
Davis, Ossie—713
Davis, Ron—192
Davis, Wendy—841
Dawson, Andre N.—580, 851
Dawson, Rosario—261
Day, Nora Davis—713
Dayton, Mark B.—187, 387, 780, 797
de Blasio, Bill—237, 391, 561–562, 590
Dean, Karl F.—87
Dec, Billy—845
Dee, Ruby—713
Deese, Brian C.—53
DeGeneres, Ellen L.—836
deGravelles, John W.—835, 879
Del Bosque, Joe L., Jr.—138, 140
Del Bosque, Maria G.—138
Delaney, John K.—568
Delanney, Laurent—854
DeLauro, Rosa L.—218–219, 374
DelBene, Suzan K.—417, 844
Delfin, Carolina Garcia—499
Delgado Hernández, Pedro A.—861
Dellinger, Daniel M.—844
DeMars, Misty—66, 92, 93
DeMoss, James—610
DeMoss, Joe—610
Dempsey, Martin E.—57, 377, 600, 840
Denton, Jeremiah A., Jr.—338
Deshchytsya, Andriy—408
Desilets, Naomi L.—701
Desjarlais, Lynn—267
Deutch, Theodore E.—271
Deval, Patrick L.—833
Di Rupo, Elio—281, 300, 320, 658, 853
DiFiore, Eric—843
Dimock, David—822
Dingell, Deborah A.—175, 348
Dingell, John D., Jr.—175, 348, 353
Disbrow, Lisa S.—831, 878
Dodson, Avery—608
Doi, Kerry N.—832
Dolson, Stephanie—686
Donahue, Reggie—340
Donahue, Richard—340
Donato, James—861
Donohue, Sean—582
Donovan, Lucas—591, 592
Donovan, Milo—591, 592
Donovan, Shaun L.S.—544, 560, 591, 883
Dotson, Al, Jr.—823
Dougherty, Dale—747
Douglass, Linda—838
Doyle, James E.—82
Doyle, Michael F.—76, 400–401, 403
Doyle, William P.—826, 876
Drake, Michael V.—723
Drezner, Jeff—567, 568
Drezner, Lora—567
Duckworth, L. Tammy—828
Dufner, Amanda—774
Dufner, Jason—774
Duggal, Shafali Razdan—853
Duggan, Michael E.—107, 827
Duncan, Arne—56–57, 96, 502, 605, 683, 696, 703, 732, 824, 855
Dunford, Joseph F., Jr.—596, 598, 603, 851
Dunkin, Ann E.—826, 876
Durant, Kevin W.—694
Durbin, Richard J.—193, 344, 585–586, 588, 846
Dyer, John "Buddy," Jr.—265–266
Dynan, Karen—866
D'Alessandro, Thomas J., III—568

Earnest, Don—628
Earnest, Joshua R.—627
Echevarria, Joseph J., Jr.—627, 832
Edwards, Donna F.—72, 368, 568
Effron, Blair W.—559–560
Effron, Cheryl Cohen—559
Egerman, Joanne—706
Egerman, Paul—706
Ehrlich, Manuel H., Jr.—826, 876
Ehrmann, Nick—37
Elibaev, Elbek—842
Elkann, Ginevra—838
Elkann, John—838
Elkind, Jonathan—866
Elliott, Ronald—87
Ellis, Larry R.—844
Ellison, Keith M.—130, 186, 189, 780, 795, 797
Elmaraghy, George A.—851
Els, Ernie—773–774
El-Sayed, Mostafa A.—842
Elsisi, Abdelfattah Said—855
Emanuel, Rahm I.—93, 175, 190, 518, 840
Emerson, Alex—198
Emmert, Mark A.—619
Enda, Kenny—250, 252
Engel, Eliot L.—557, 822
Engler, Richard J.—866
Entwistle, James F.—831
Erdogan, Recep Tayyip—830
Erevia, Santiago J.—259, 260
Erler, Ben—796, 798–800, 802, 804

Erler, Henry—782, 796, 799, 802, 804
Erler, Jack—782, 796, 798–799, 802, 804
Erler, Rebekah—782, 796–800, 802–804, 859
Estrada, John L.—866
Esty, Elizabeth H.—218
Etheridge, Melissa—228–229
Eufrazio, Nicholas—758–759, 812
Evans, Akosua Barthwell—823
Ewing, Rodney—856
Eychaner, Fred—588

Fabella, Charlie J., Jr.—814
Fabius, Laurent—854
Fallin, Mary—171–173, 450, 830
Fallon, Katherine Beirne—842
Fan, Karen—608
Farmer, Declan—358
Farrar, Jonathan D.—859
Farrell, John—340
Fazi, Mohammed—632, 641
Feeley, John D.—850
Feibelman, Camilla C.—866
Feingold, Russell L.—839
Feinstein, Dianne—138, 236, 829
Felipe, Crown Prince—857
Felipe VI, King—760
Felton, Wanda—866
Ferguson, Daniel M.—378–380
Ferguson, Jesse Tyler—744
Fialka-Feldman, Micah—848
Finchem, Timothy W.—773
Firestone, James—525
Firestone, Nancy B.—842, 880
Fischer, Stanley—822, 875
Fisher, John "Jimbo"—822
Fitzgerald, Rich—77, 400–402, 731
FitzGerald, Tom—851
Fixell, Drew—556
Flemming, Jim—82, 825
Flores, Cinthia—728
Forster-Cox, Susan—838
Forsyth Mejia, Harold Winston—523
Foster, G. William—747
Fox, Christine H.—377, 526
Foxman, Abraham H.—127
Foxx, Anthony R.—146, 186, 189, 191, 556, 558, 831
Fraenkel, Avi—816
Fraenkel, Naftali—816
Fraenkel, Rachel—816
France, Brian Z.—774
Francis, Kimberly—410, 843
Francis, Pope—103, 328, 331–332, 335, 398, 495, 838
Frank, Billy, Jr.—524
Frank, Richard G.—866
Frankel, Lois—271
Franken, Al—187, 189, 797–798, 802, 859
Franklin, Aretha—228–229
Freedman, Craig—354, 356
Freeman, Beth Labson—861
Freeman, Jim—823
Freeman, Morgan—585
Friedland, Michelle T.—861
Friedlander, Mira—347, 352, 840
Friedman, Thomas L.—726
Froman, Michael B.—450, 751
Fryer, Roland—857
Fudge, Marcia L.—110
Fugate, W. Craig—525, 628, 853
Furler, Sia—744

Galifianakis, Zach—831
Galinat, Kathleen—98
Gallegos, Gonzalo R.—847
Gantt, Clara—601–602
Garber, Don—619
Garcetti, Eric M.—11
Garcia, Joe—230, 233, 271
Garcia, José, Sr.—271
Gardner, Anthony L.—866
Gardner, Devin—348
Garrett, Major—408, 843
Gassman, Eve—269, 272
Gates, Robert M.—17–18, 791
Gates, William H., III—471
Gayles, Darrin P.—745, 827, 877
Gaytan, Peter S.—844
Gearan, Mark D.—866
Gebru, Felege—608
Genier, Leslie—597
Gephard, Stephen R.—842
Gerard, Leo W.—77, 825
Gerson, Michael J.—839
Ghani Ahmadzai, Ashraf—604
Giancarlo, J. Christopher—866, 880
Gianotti, Fabiola—838
Gibson, Sloan D.—621, 809, 810–811, 852, 859, 867
Giffey, Niels—686
Gilbert, Liza—592
Gilbert, Mark—867
Gimenez, Carlos A.—230
Ginsberg, Benjamin L.—56, 69, 393
Giuliani, Rudolph W.—517
Giuliano, Mark F.—840
Giunta, Salvatore A.—554
Glavin, Calla—610
Glovksy, Robert J.—835
Goe, Jeanne—343
Gohmert, Louis B., Jr.—102
Goldin, Claudia—857
Goldyn, Lawrence—814

Gomes, Jonny—341
Gomez-Hernandez, Rafael—688
Gomez-Marroquin, Annie Stefanny—98
Gonder, Ted—832
Gonzolez, Caitlin—606
Gordon, Philip H.—839
Gordon, Robert M.—846, 880
Gore, Albert A., Jr.—87, 825
Gorguze, Lynn E.—534
Gottemoeller, Rose E.—867
Govashiri, Ferial—723
Govashiri, Sina—723
Grab, Kelsey V.—468
Graham, D. Robert—839
Grande, Ariana—228
Gray, Danielle C.—19
Green, Al—23, 380
Green, James W.F.—835, 879
Green, Mark—828, 877
Greenberg, Jack—850
Greer, Lauren T.—759
Grey, Robert J., Jr.—867
Griffin, Richard J.—572–573, 575
Griffin, Tim—525–526, 848
Griggsby, Lydia K.—842, 880
Groff, Peter C.—835
Gronkiewicz-Waltz, Hanna—650
Groves, Robert M.—856
Grybauskaite, Dalia—834
Guelleh, Ismail Omar—519–520, 843
Guilarte, Mileydi—826, 876
Gul, Abdullah—849
Gutierrez, Luis—835
Gutter, Pinchas—533

Haas, Jay—773
Habib, Dan—857
Hachigian, Nina—823, 875
Hackett, Katherine—3–5
Hadi, Abd Rabuh Mansur—755, 825
Hagan, Kay—24
Hagel, Charles T.—56–57, 414, 423, 526, 600, 821, 822, 824, 828, 830, 833, 840, 843, 850, 852, 855, 858
Hahn, Janice—102
Hale, David J.—858, 883
Haley, Kristen—378
Halkowski, Thomas L.—842, 880
Hallinan, Patrick K.—600
Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani—852
Hamamoto, Pamela K.—867
Hamdi, Mongi—365
Hamilton, Adam—397
Hammer, Michael A.—834, 867
Hammond, Tony—867
Handelsman, Jo Emily—867
Hanes, Maria—606
Hannity, Sean—517
Harkin, Thomas R.—68, 170, 500
Harper, Keith M.—867
Harper, Stephen J.—149, 152, 155, 830, 832, 856
Harper, Willy—418
Harpool, M. Douglas—862
Harrington, Matthew T.—867
Harris, Lawrence—36
Harris, Pamela—848, 881
Harrity, Sheila M.—701, 703, 706, 733
Hart, Christopher A.—859, 884
Hartley, Brent R.—856
Hartley, Bria—686
Hartley, Jane D.—855, 883
Harvin, William P. "Percy"—576
Haslem, Udonis—23
Haslet-Davis, Adrianne—340
Hassan, Margaret Wood—166, 220
Hastings, W. Reed, Jr.—836
Hatch, Mark—730–731
Hatta, Madd—827
Hauger, Simon—748–749
Hawthorne, Brian A.—679
Haynes, Frederick D., III—392
Hazel, George J.—863
Hedman, Susan—851
Heflin, Donald L.—856
Heiden, Eric—829
Heinrich, Martin—578
Heitkamp, Mary Kathryn "Heidi"—720
Heller, Dean A.—4
Helman, Sharon—572
Hemmati, Farid—320
Hemmati, Laura—320, 322, 325
Hendrick, Joseph R. "Rick," III—774–775
Hendricks, Bruce H.—861
Henry, John W.—340
Herbeck, Josh—610
Herbert, Gary R.—830, 855
Herbst, Susan—685
Hernández Alvarado, Juan Orlando—823
Heyman, Bruce—867
Hezir, Joseph S.—867
Hickenlooper, John W.—171–172, 830, 855
Hickey, Pat—205
Hicks, Jasmine—822
Hicks, Thomas—867
Hieftje, John—348
Higginbottom, Heather A.—859
Hill, Janet—831
Himes, James—218
Hinojosa, Ruben—523, 835
Hirono, Mazie K.—102
Hjelt, Christine—839

Hobbs, Robert L.—863
Hodges, Betsy A.—186, 780, 798
Hoeven, John—720
Holder, Eric H., Jr.—42–44, 56–57, 337, 393–394, 512, 547, 661, 808, 824
Holdren, John P.—605, 747, 777
Holladay, Jon M.—867
Holland, Logan—602
Holland, Wendy—602
Holland, Will—602
Hollande, François—112–113, 115, 128, 272, 644, 661–662, 676, 827–828, 832, 834, 842, 845, 849, 854, 858
Holler, Zachary W.—848
Holleyman, Robert W., II—831, 878
Holt, Rush D., Jr.—147, 747
Hoover, John—867
Horn, Alan F.—528
Horn, Cindy—528–529
Hoseini-Khamenei, Ayatollah Ali—270
Houston, Andrew W.—836
Hoyer, Steny H.—96, 98, 134, 368, 567
Hoza, Michael S.—867
Huckabee, Michael D.—517
Hudy, Joey—747
Huerta, Dolores C.—261
Huerta, John E.—835
Huffman, Jared W.—236
Hughes, Todd M.—813
Hulit, Jeanne A.—29–30
Humetewa, Diane J.—862
Hunter, Joel C.—398
Hurley, Natalie—608
Huther, Bradford R.—835, 879
Hyatt, Amy J.—867
Hyde, Dana J.—868

Ibrahim, Yasmin—449–450
Idelson, Jeffrey L.—851
Iizuka, Shigeo—844
Ilves, Toomas Hendrik—834
Imada, Bill—845
Inskeep, Steve—852
Inslee, Jay R.—170, 174, 287, 417, 830, 844
Irwin, Jeff—350
Isaksson, Dan—823
Israel, Steven J.—134, 567, 796–797
Iturregui, Juan Carlos—829, 878
Izzo, Tom—107

Jackson, Andrew—834
Jackson, James S.—856
Jackson Lee, Sheila—380
Jacobs, Irwin M.—534–535
Jacobs, Jack L.—143
Jacobs, Joan K.—534–535
Jacobson, Roberta S.—823, 829, 834, 859, 878
Jadotte, Marcus D.—851, 882
Jaenichen, Paul N., Sr.—868
Jaishankar, Subrahmanyam—834
James, Amie—237
James, Hamilton E. "Tony"—237, 239
James, LeBron—22–23, 694
James, Walter L., Jr.—368
Jarba, Ahmad al- —849
Jarrett, Valerie B.—56, 348, 824, 839, 854
Javits, Joshua M.—836
JeanLuis, Jean Gerard—548
Jelenko, Jane—851
Jelinek, W. Craig—74
Jerome, Jessica—359
Jeter, Jamal—98
Jewell, Sarah M.R. "Sally"—345–346, 576–578, 720
Jilani, Jalil Abbas—834
Jinich, Patricia—523
Johnson, Anne—822
Johnson, Broderick—626–627, 825
Johnson, Chandra J.—775
Johnson, Earvin "Magic," Jr.—191, 195, 627
Johnson, Eric—744
Johnson, Genevieve M.—775
Johnson, Jeh C.—409–410, 547, 552, 628, 808, 818, 835, 853
Johnson, Jimmie K.—774–775, 858
Johnson, Kevin—764
Johnson, Lydia N.—775
Johnson, Ron H.—854
Johnson, Sabina—842
Johnson, Zach—774
Jomaa, Mehdi—362, 364, 826, 836, 841
Jones, Cobi—859
Jones, Dale E.—102
Jones, Stuart E.—848, 881
Jordan, Michael—774
Juan Carlos I, King—760, 857
Judd, Ashley T.—825
Junor, Laura—831, 878

Kadzik, Peter J.—868
Kagan, Elena—19
Kaidanow, Tina S.—868
Kaine, Timothy M.—215
Kamen, Dean—748
Kaplan, Jennifer Yeager—850
Kaplan, Roberta A.—744–745, 815
Kaplan, Sam—795
Kaplan, Sylvia—795
Kaptur, Marcia C.—854
Karas, Barry W.—835
Karp, Alexander C.—836
Karp, David—689–700

Karpinski, Gene—775
Karzai, Hamid—831, 847, 851
Kasher, Richard R.—856
Kassebaum Baker, Nancy—794
Kastner, Marc A.—868
Katz, Andy—836
Katz, Jeff—580
Katz, Robert J.—530
Kaye, Elliot F.—838, 879
Kearney, Mark A.—856
Keckler, Charles N.W.—868
Keenan, Cody S.—824
Keepseagle, George—720
Keflezighi, Mebrahtom—516
Keliher, Patrick C.—842
Kelly, Chris—76
Kelly, Thomas P., III—840, 880
Kem, John S.—851
Kempner, Michael W.—821, 875
Kenis, Ann S.—856
Kennedy, Caroline B.—844
Kennedy, Joseph P., III—176
Kennedy, Owen—224
Kennedy, Patrick J.—224, 225
Kennedy, Richard A.—868
Kennedy, Victoria R.—829, 877
Kenny, Aoibhinn—249–250
Kenny, Enda—248, 835
Kenny, Ferdia—249–250
Kenny, Fionnuala—250
Kenny, Naoise—249–250
Kenworthy, Gus—358
Kerlikowske, R. Gil—868
Kerry, John F.—104, 119, 160, 209, 211, 213–214, 226, 240, 256, 423, 444, 752, 807, 817, 821, 827, 836, 838–839, 841, 848, 854, 857, 859
Kessel, Amanda—235
Ketchum, Richard G.—832
Key, John P.—762, 821, 850
Key, Max—762, 821
Khairkhwa, Khirullah Said Wali—632, 641
Khattala, Ahmed Abu—729, 741
Kia'aina, Esther Puakela—868
Kiernan, Leslie Berger—868, 876
Kildee, Daniel T.—108
Kim, James—450
Kim, Jim Yong—452
Kim, Sung—436, 451–452
Kim, Todd S.—829, 877
Kimball, Suzette M.—822, 875
King, Alison—836
King, Billie Jean—829
Kitzhaber, John A.—174, 830
Kleber, Claus—824
Kleinschmidt, Mark—24
Klobuchar, Amy J.—108, 795, 797
Klotz, Frank G.—868
Knaus, Chad A.—774–775
Kobliner, Beth—832
Koch, Charles G.—516
Koch, David H.—516
Komorowski, Bronislaw—636–637, 647–648, 650–651, 832, 853
Kony, Joseph—298, 716
Koofi, Fawzia—599
Kopocis, Kenneth J.—868
Koran, Donald W.—839
Kornbluh, Karen—831, 878
Kornze, Neil G.—868
Korrell, Harry J.F., III—868
Kovich, Graham—840
Krass, Caroline D.—868
Krause, Cheryl A.—827, 877
Kravitz, Leonard A.—259
Krol, George A.—847, 881
Krugman, Paul—857
Krygier, Earl E.—857
Kubiske, Lisa—823
Kukat, Sandra—828
Kulkowitz, Harry—678
Kumar, Arun M.—868
Kurtzer, Daniel—822

La Lime, Helen Meagher—868
LaBelle, Patti—228–229
Lackey, John—340
LaCross, Ben—107, 109–110
LaFleur, Cheryl A.—847, 881
LaHood, Raymond H.—773
LaJoy, Philip J.—175
LaManno, Terri—399
Lambrew, Jeanne M.—839
Lamont, Thomas R.—833
Lancefield, Margaret—147
Land, Terry Lynn—380
Lane, Donald R.—821
Langley, Nanci E.—869
LaPlante, William A., Jr.—869
Larsen, Richard R.—417
Larson, John B.—218
Lauck, M. Hannah—863
Lavrov, Sergey Viktorovich—240
Lawson, Michael A.—869
Lazaney-Rodriguez, Carlos—378–380
Lazowski, Alan B.—833
Leahy, Patrick J.—108, 846
Leal, Adrianne—229, 232–233
Leanca, Iurie—832
Ledbetter, Lilly—73, 373–376, 788
Lee, Alison R.—862

Lee, Michael S.—193
Leeson, Joseph F., Jr.—856
Lehrer, Mia Guttfreund—855
Lehrer-Stein, Janice—840
Leija, Janessa—606
Leitman, Matthew F.—862
Lenhardt, Alfonso E.—838, 879
Leslie, John W., Jr.—859, 884
Lester, Jon—340
Letta, Enrico—829
Lettman-Hicks, Sharon J.—823
Levi, John G.—869
Levie, Aaron W.—836
Levin, Carl M.—108, 353, 846
Levine, Cheryl—620
Levine, Isaac—620
Levine, Jason—620
Levine, Rueben—620
Levine, Sidney—620
LeVine, Suzan G.—826, 876
Levy, Jon D.—862
Levy, Judith E.—813, 862
Lew, Jacob J.—76, 79–80, 144, 822, 824, 827, 832, 835–836, 841, 843, 849, 852
Lewis, John R.—383, 385, 841
Libman, Marilyn—259
Libman, Mitchel—259
Lichens, Marylisa—855
Liebreich, Leo—500
Limerick, Patricia Nelson—869
Lipman, Sheryl H.—862
Lippert, Mark W.—847, 881
Liveris, Andrew N.—94
Lobo-Rushin, Rebecca R.—836
Lockett, Clayton D.—512
Logan, Steven P.—862
Logan, Vincent G.—869
Lomax, Michael L.—823
Lombardo, Michael—831
Long, Sharon, R.—833
Longhi, Mario—76, 825
Lopes, Mark E.—869
Lopez, Estevan R.—833, 878
Lopez, Ivan A.—378
Lowe, Shelly C.—869
Lowenthal, Alan S.—723
Lowey, Nita M.—557
Lu, Christopher P.—367, 821, 875
Lu, Donald—869
Lucas, Frank D.—108
Lucchino, Larry—340
Luger, Andrew M.—864
Luna, Diego—261
Lyles, Latifa A.—833
Lynch, Marshawn T.—576
Mabus, Raymond E., Jr.—839
MacCracken, Andrew I.—680–684
MacDougall, Heather L.—869
MacFarlane, Allison M.—288
Madati, Kilandigalu M. "Kay"—832
Maddox, Victor B.—869
Mader, David A.—847, 881
Mader, Joyce A.—835
Maeda, John—847, 881
Mahoney, B. Aisha—368, 371
Mailer, Dee Jay—845
Maliki, Nuri al- —710, 753–754, 756
Malinowski, Tomasz P.—869
Malloy, Dannel P.—168, 170, 217–218, 220, 234, 313, 833
Malone, Debra L.—759
Maloney, Sean Patrick—557
Mamet, Noah B.—869
Manilow, Lewis—585
Manilow, Susan—585
Mann, Erica—179
Manuel, Warde—685
Markell, Jack A.—173
Markey, Edward J.—706
Marks, Bryant T.—823
Márquez, Gabriel García—413
Márquez, Rosemary—861
Marshall, Marlon—839
Martelly, Michel—106
Martin, Sybrina—192
Martin, Tracey—192
Martinez, Damon P.—864
Martinez, Kathy—828
Martinez, Leonardo—688
Martinez, Richard—698
Martinez, Susana—173
Marvel, L. Paige—869
Marvin, Gisèle M. "Gigi"—187, 235
Massad, Timothy G.—869–870
Mastracchio, Rick—844
Mastroianni, Mark G.—863
Mastromonaco, Alyssa—837
Mathilde, Queen—320
Mauldin, Erin—610
Maxwell, Byron S.—576
Maxwell, Kevin M.—368, 371
May, Leigh M.—863
Mayer, Marissa—538
Mayorkas, Alejandro—580
May-Parker, Jennifer Prescod—861
Mazza, Dave—29
Mazzant, Amos L., III—859, 884
McAlpin, Sherman—518
McAuliffe, Terence R.—168
McBride, Jonathan—859

McCabe, Janet Garvin—874
McCabe, Jennifer S.—749
McCain, John S., III—726, 854
McCarthy, Carolyn—8
McCarthy, Patricia M.—850, 882
McCarthy, Regina—146, 633, 847
McCarville, Jane—712
McCollum, Betty L.—186, 189, 795
McComb, Sean M.—503–504
McComb, Silas—503
McConnell, A. Mitchell—12, 203, 517, 817, 840, 857
McCord, Michael J.—826, 876
McCray, Chirlane—237
McCrory, Patrick L.—24
McCue, Susan—870
McDonald, Diane—810–811
McDonald, Robert A.—809, 860
McDonough, Denis R.—196, 836, 855
McFarlane, Nancy—24
McFaul, Michael A.—827, 829
McFly, Tommy—822
McGovern, James P.—701, 846
McGuinness, Tara D.—838–839
McGuire, Matthew T.—828, 877
McHale, Joel E.—516, 518
McHugh, Carolyn B.—861
McHugh, Gerald A., Jr.—862
McHugh, John M.—377, 610
McHugh, Larry—685
McIntyre, Dee Strickland—8
McIntyre, Douglas C. "Mike"—8, 24
McIntyre, Joshua—8
McIntyre, Stephen—8
McKamey, Will—414
McKelvey, Kevin—825
McKeon, Brian P.—826, 876
McLeod, Gilbert L.—147
McLeod, Gloria Negrete—147
McManus, Gerry—608
McNerney, W. James, Jr.—751
McSweeny, Terrell—870
McWatters, J. Mark—874
Mead, Matthew H.—831, 855
Mebane, Brandon J.—576
Mendez, Victor M.—849, 882
Mendoza, Carlos E.—827, 877
Mendoza, Jerilyn—822
Mendoza, Salvador, Jr.—823, 875
Menino, Angela Faletra—340
Menino, Thomas M.—223, 340
Mensah, Lisa—848, 881
Merkel, Angela—408, 505, 821, 830, 832–834, 836, 841, 843, 845, 847, 858
Merlo, Larry J.—102
Merritt, Kenneth J. "Rock"—678
Merrity, Gregory—93–94
Messina, James A.—184
Meyer, Jeffrey A.—861
Meyers, Leslie—831
Michelson, Laurie J.—862
Michiko, Empress—421, 431, 844–845
Mickelson, Phil—774
Migler, Rachael—785
Mikulski, Barbara A.—52, 374
Mikva, Laurie I.—870
Milbern, Stacey—857
Miles-LaGrange, Vicki—870
Miller, Cynthia Caccavo—20
Miller, Debra L.—870
Miller, Earl R.—856
Miller, Ellyn—360
Miller, Ericka M.—870
Miller, Frazier Glenn, Jr.—397, 399, 532
Miller, George, III—20, 68, 170, 500
Miller, George, IV—20
Miller, Jake—360
Miller, James C., III—870
Miller, John W.—218–219
Miller, Mark—360
Miller, Michael H.—414
Miller, Ronald L.—835, 879
Miller, Stephen—20
Millett, Patricia A.—20
Milley, Mark A.—377
Mills, Karen Gordon—29
Millsaps, Linda Struyk—838, 879
Milstein, Constance J.—766
Minor, Alex—246
Minor, Amanda—246
Minor, Eric—246
Minor, Jon—246
Minor, Nancy—246–247
Minow, Martha L.—870
Mitchell, Theodore R.—870
Modi, Narendra—849–850
Mogherini, Federica—328
Mohamed, Abdullahi S.—564
Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince—832, 837
Mohd Irwan—846
Mohorovic, Joseph P.—870
Mohri, Mamoru—429, 844
Molina, Kiara—8–13
Monaco, Lisa O.—840, 853
Monae, Janelle—228–229
Mondale, Joan Adams—96
Mondale, Walter F.—96, 186, 795
Moniz, Ernest J.—24, 544, 823
Monterrosa, Esperanza—728
Moody, James M., Jr.—862

Moore, Gwendolyne S.—82
Moore, John—608
Moore, Maya—712
Moore, Westley W.O.—821, 875
Mora Icaza, Eduardo Medina—523
Moran, James P.—30
Moreno, Carlos R.—870
Moreno, Luis G.—870
Morgan, Jordan D.—348
Morial, Marc H.—391, 832
Morin, Jamie M.—870
Morine, Marla—343–344
Moritsugu, Erika L.—833, 878
Moritz, Nancy L.—861
Morris, Daniel S.—842
Morris, Mary—259
Morris, Melvin—258–260
Mosqueda-Lewis, Kaleena—686
Moss, Randolph D.—840, 879
Mosteller, Brian—828
Mourning, Alijah H.—271, 273–274
Mourning, Alonzo H., Jr.—271, 273, 845
Mourning, Alonzo, III—271
Mourning, Tracy—271–274
Muhammad, Hasna—713
Mujica Cordano, Jose "Pepe"—545, 843
Mulina, Rupa Abraham—834
Mullen, Mark—836
Mulligan, Deanna M.—835
Muñoz, Henry R., III—201, 354, 356, 538, 744
Murawsky, Jeffrey A.—847, 881, 883
Murphy, Christopher S.—854
Murphy, Derek T.—705
Murphy, Glenn K.—171
Murphy, Maggie—850
Murphy, Ryan—746
Murray Edward B.—576
Murray, Patricia L.—243–244, 417, 844
Murthy, Vivek H.—870
Museveni, Yoweri Kaguta—143
Mustard, Allan P.—853, 883
Myers, Mike—378

Nabors, Robert L., II—571–572, 621–622, 624, 810, 827, 840, 850, 852, 859
Nadler, Jerrold L.—557
Nafie, Gabrielle—198
Najafi, Usama Abdul Aziz Al- —756
Najib Razak—455–456, 465–466, 468, 476–477, 480, 484–485, 845–846
Napier, Shabazz—686
Napoli, Mike—340
Napolitano, Giorgio—281, 328–329, 334, 838
Napolitano, Janet A.—723, 827
Narasaki, Diane—845
Narasimhan, Shekar—845
Navarro Cerrano, Victor Ramón—629
Nazarbayev, Nursultan—295, 834, 837
Nazzaro, Barbara—838
Nealon, James D.—847, 881
Nee, Thomas J.—547
Néeman, Ari—836
Neeson, Liam J.—531
Nelson, Hannah—251
Nelson, Julie—836
Netanyahu, Benjamin—208, 256–257, 525, 828
Nethery, Mark T.—870
Newton, Jim—730
Ng, Howard—466
Ng, Joan—466
Ng, Konrad—150, 466
Ng, Savita—236
Ng, Suhaila—236
Nichols, Brian A.—870
Nicholson, Marvin D., Jr.—821
Nieves-Ayala, Jeanette—406
Nikias, C.L. "Max"—530
Nishida, Jane—840, 880
Niumatalolo, Ken—414
Nix-Hines, Crystal—871
Nolan, Richard M.—795
Noori, Norullah—632, 641
Nooter, William W.—864
Norton, Eleanor Holmes—547, 568
Novelli, Catherine A.—871
Nozick, Linda—856
Nugent, Ted—204
Nujayfi, Usama al- —824
Nuland, Victoria J.—854
Nutter, Michael A.—11, 60
Nye, William S.—197, 605, 748

Obama, Malia—36, 59, 61, 103, 121, 192, 236, 246, 248, 262, 266, 278, 350, 377, 385–386, 391, 416, 474, 506, 587, 618, 682–683, 686, 694, 701, 712, 730, 734, 738, 744, 765, 767, 769, 771, 778, 788–789, 793, 800, 814, 821, 824, 834, 844
Obama, Michelle—1, 5, 8, 10, 14, 20, 23–24, 30, 34–37, 53, 62, 64, 67, 74, 78, 85, 87, 91, 96, 100, 103, 109, 113, 115, 127–128, 136, 147, 169, 171–172, 174–175, 179–180, 186, 192, 197, 223, 229–233, 244, 248, 251, 262, 266, 278, 339, 354, 356–359, 368, 371, 374, 382, 385, 392, 396, 399–400, 405–406, 413, 415–416, 419, 495, 504, 506, 515–516, 528, 536, 542, 561–562, 573, 580, 585, 599, 601, 617–618, 679, 681–682, 697, 699, 702, 708, 720–721, 733–734, 739, 744, 757–758, 765, 767, 771, 775, 793–794, 796, 798–800, 803, 809, 812, 814, 824, 828, 833–834, 838, 841–844, 849–850, 852, 856–859

Obama, Natasha "Sasha"—36, 59, 61, 103, 121, 192, 236, 246, 248, 262, 266, 278, 350, 377, 385–386, 391, 416, 474, 506, 516, 587, 618, 682–683, 686, 694, 700, 712, 730, 733–734, 738, 744, 765, 767, 769, 771, 778, 788, 793, 800, 814, 821, 824, 834, 844, 859
Oberstar, James L.—515
Oberstar, Jean K.—515
Obstfeld, Maurice—853
Occomy, Marcia D.—847, 881
O'Connor, Kevin—701
Odierno, Raymond T.—377, 610, 619, 840
O'Donnell, Norah—859
O'Driscoll, Brian—250
Ogunyipe, Benro T.—840
Okada, Mary Ann Young—845
Oldham, Spooner—228
Oliver, Pam—620
Ollie, Kevin—685–686, 843
Olson, Theodore B.—826
O'Malley, Kevin F.—854, 883
O'Malley, Martin J.—72, 75, 168, 170, 172, 367–368
O'Malley, Mary—703
Omari, Mohammed Nabi—632, 641
Ordel, Arthur W., Jr.—113
O'Regan, Katherine M.—871
O'Reilly, Bill—193, 826
Orr, Franklin M., Jr.—871
Ortiz, David A. "Big Papi"—340–341
Ortiz, Epi—197
Ortiz, Shelly—197
Oshie, Timothy L. "T.J."—187
Osius, Theodore G., III—849, 882
Otter, Clement L. "Butch"—855
Outtara, Alassane Dramane—101
Owens, Billy Lynn Humphrey—378
Owens, Jane—24
Owens, John B.—861
Owens, Loredana—378
Owens, Maurice—196
Owens, Timothy W.—378–380
Owens, William L.—24

Pace, Janson—359
Pace, Lacee L.—359
Pace, Traycen—359
Pacquiao, Manny—498
Padilla, Alejandro Javier Garcia—688
Pai, Ajit—96
Paisley, Brad D.—596–597, 851
Paisley, Huck—597
Paisley, Jasper—597
Palmieri, Francisco—847
Panchanathan, Sethuraman—856
Pancholy, Maulik—845
Pappert, Gerald J.—856
Park Geun-hye—299, 437–439, 450–452, 845
Park Ji-young—452
Parker, Annise D.—380
Parker, Linda V.—862
Parker, P. Mark—744
Parolin, Pietro Cardinal—333, 838
Pascrell, William J., Jr.—619
Pascual, Carlos—871
Pasia-Comerford, Cristeta—498
Pastor, Edward L.—197
Pastor, Verma Mendez—197
Patrick, Deval L.—170–171, 173, 217–218, 220, 223–225, 234, 313, 701–702, 704, 706, 708, 761, 859
Patten, Casey—29
Patterson, Shelley—711
Paul, Rand—516
Paul, Randal H.—9
Payne, Charles—531
Peddicord, Kenneth—856
Peduto, William—77, 400–402, 731, 739
Pelley, Scott—838
Pelosi, Nancy—134–136, 243, 244, 261, 271–274, 344, 374, 380, 501, 528, 530, 534, 536, 568, 570, 592, 766, 770, 796–797, 817, 839–840, 857
Pelosi, Paul F., Sr.—134
Peña Nieto, Enrique—147, 149, 152, 155, 818, 822, 830, 857
Peng Liyuan—278
Pepper, Pamela—847, 880
Pereira, Donald L.—859
Peres, Shimon—525, 700, 858
Perez, Myrna—871
Perez, Thomas E.—75, 84, 94, 130, 217–218, 222, 246–247, 375, 377, 402, 766, 771, 798, 802, 813, 823, 833, 859
Perry, J. Richard—518
Peters, Ben—534
Peters, Gary C.—107, 348, 353, 840
Peters, Scott H.—534
Peterson, Cody—414
Peterson, Collin C.—108
Peterson, James D.—863
Petrella, Siobhan—703
Pettit, James D.—851, 882
Petty, Joseph M.—701–702
Petty, Julie A.—848
Petty, Richard L.—774
Pfeiffer, H. Daniel—824, 855
Phan, Linda X.—845
Philippe, King—300, 320, 658, 853
Philips, John R.—838
Piano, Renzo—838
Pickard, Jose—688
Pierluisi, Pedro R.—688
Pietrzyk, Joseph P.—871

Pigford, Joshua—748
Pijbes, Wim—276, 837
Pikus-Pace, Noelle—359
Pilchik, Miles—198
Pillard, Cornelia T.L. "Nina"—20
Piñera Echenique, Sebastián—806
Piñiero, Miguel—688
Pinkert, Dean A.—744
Pitman, Robert L.—859, 884
Pitts, Ryan M.—858
Planalp, Ronnie—835
Podesta, John D.—45, 842, 850
Polaschik, Joan A.—849, 882
Polsky, Alan—587
Polsky, Gabriel—587
Polsky, Michael—585–588
Polsky, Tanya—585, 587
Popovich, Gregg C.—779, 858
Poroshenko, Petro—614, 639–640, 644, 648, 653–654, 658, 662, 664, 672, 852, 854
Posey, William J.—688
Potter, Brian—703
Powell, Colin L.—191, 195, 703
Powell, Jerome H.—822, 875
Power, Samantha—839
Pratt, Jessica—727
Pressman, David—856
Price, Nick—773
Pritzker, Penny S.—93–94, 173, 177, 400, 402, 488, 839, 841, 843
Probst, Lawrence F., III—358
Pryor, Jill A.—861
Pryor, Mark L.—525–526, 848
Pugh, Cary D.—855, 883
Pugh, Lisa—848
Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich—162–163, 200, 211, 213–214, 240, 242, 255, 263, 288–289, 409, 411, 428, 447–448, 461, 490, 509–511, 517, 644–645, 649, 662–664, 666, 824, 830, 832–833, 835, 839, 842, 854, 858
Pyatt, Geoffrey R.—854
Pyle, Gregory E.—11

Quillen, Carol E.—832
Quinn, Johnny—358
Quinn, Patrick J., III—170, 175, 588, 851
Quiñones Alejandro, Nitza I.—813

Radelet, Carolyn Hessler—871
Radzanowski, David—871
Rahall, Nick J., II—687
Rajoy Brey, Mariano—15, 834
Ramirez, Candy—767
Ramirez, Louis A.—405–406
Ramirez, Shelby—767, 858
Ramirez, Susana—857
Ramirez, Vanessa—767
Ramis, Harold—179
Randall, Barclay—90
Randlett, Lorna May Ho—845
Rapp, Stephen J.—839
Raskin, Sarah Bloom—871
Rasmussen, Anders Fogh—309, 311, 334, 642
Ray, Rachael—845
Rayes, Douglas L.—862
Rayes, Nathalie—826
Reddick, Eunice S.—871
Reece, Gabrielle—855
Reed, John F.—4, 560, 562, 610
Reed, Thomas W., II—176
Reese, Thomas J.—849
Reeve, Cheryl—712
Reeves, Pamela L.—861
Regalbuto, Monica C.—833, 878
Register, Jesse—87
Reid, Harry M.—273, 817, 826, 840, 857
Remnick, David—821
Remsburg, Cory—71–72, 602, 679
Renzi, Matteo—326, 830, 834, 838, 845, 858
Reuter, Dean A.—838, 879
Reynolds, Keenan—414
Reynolds, Michelle C.—848
Rhodes, Benjamin J.—226, 824, 836, 839
Rice, Susan E.—836, 838–840, 844, 846, 849, 854, 856–857
Richardson, James T.—96
Rickett, Jerry—11
Rignot, Eric—724
Riley, Patrick J.—22–23
Ripa, Kelly—852
Ritsch, Massie—871
Rivera, David—858, 883
Rivkin, Charles H.—871
Rivlin, Reuven—700
Robb, Charles S.—215
Robb, Lynda Johnson—215
Roberson, Jessie H.—854, 883
Roberson, Shanelle A.—684
Robertson, Peyton—607–608
Robertson, Shannon—607
Robinson, Elizabeth M.—871
Robinson, Glenn A., III—348
Robinson, Lance—572
Robinson, Leslie—236
Robinson, Marian—35, 74, 78, 85, 87, 230, 266, 702
Robinson, Todd D.—853, 883
Robles, Anthony—828
Rodela, Jose—259–260
Rodiles, Horacio—835
Rodriguez, Arturo S.—261

Rodriguez, Estiven—37, 66
Rodriguez, Jannise—678–679
Rodriguez, Julie Chavez—261
Rodriguez, Ramon—688
Rodriquez, Leon—874
Rogers, Harold D.—52
Rogers, John W., Jr.—831
Rogers, Melissa—103
Rogoff, Peter M.—849, 882
Rohrabacher, Dana T.—726
Rojas, Amos, Jr.—863
Romero, Nelson—96
Romney, W. Mitt—56, 69, 292, 393, 515
Rooney, Daniel M.—77
Rooney, Jo Ann—871
Rose, Charles P.—871
Rose, Frank A.—872
Rosen, Amy—832
Rosenbach, Eric—874
Rosenbaum, Amy—825
Rosenbaum, Robin S.—861
Rosenberg, Robin L.—832, 878
Rosenblum, Howard A.—836
Rosenstengel, Nancy J.—863
Rosenworcel, Jessica—96
Rosmah Mansor—455
Ross, David—341
Ross, Eleanor L.—863
Ross, Robert K.—823
Roth, John—872
Roth, Marc—749
Rothman, Thomas E.—872
Roubideaux, Yvette—872
Rouhani, Hassan—270
Rubin, Jamie S.—559–560
Rubio, Marco A.—68, 203, 221, 688
Ruggles, Erica J. Barks—856
Ruiz, Frederick R.—723
Rumain, Aiden—766
Rumain, Lisa—766, 858
Rumain, Madeline—766
Rumain, Mia—766
Ruppersberger, C.A. "Dutch"—568
Rush, Andra M.—66, 93
Rutherford, Donald L.—260
Rutte, Mark—275, 279, 284–285, 837
Ryan, Deborah A.—836
Ryan, Timothy J.—176
Rybak, Raymond T. "R.T."—186, 202, 795
Ryder, Wave—414

Sabharwal, Sunil—840, 880
Saginaw, Paul—350–351
Sahaydak, Tiffany Roberts—855
Salam, Tamam—837
Salas, Andres—606
Salazar, Kenneth L.—720
Salazar Umaña, Jose Adan—629
Sam, Michael—744, 814
Sanchéz Cerén, Salvador—850
Sanchez, Loretta—723
Sanders, Barry D.—414
Sandoval, Brian E.—831
Sannes, Brenda K.—848, 881
Santiago, Arcadio—688
Santiago, Sara—90
Santos, Daniel J.—854, 883
Sarabi, Aidin Rezaei—564
Sarbanes, John P.—568
Sargenti, D.J.—414
Sarpong, Reginald O.—701
Scaparrotti, C. Michael—436, 451–452, 845
Schaffer, Miriam—608
Schapiro, Andrew H.—833, 878
Scharf, Charles W.—832
Schauer, Mark—107, 348
Scheinman, Adam M.—872
Schiliro, Philip M.—839
Schilling, Kain—554–555
Schleper, Anne—235
Schlossberg, Rose K.—831
Schmidt, Eric E.—836
Schmidtlein, Rhonda K.—872
Schneider, Axel—506
Schneider, Janice M.—872
Schneider, John—576
Schroeder, Robert W., III—859, 884
Schultz, Dale W.—394
Schultz, Eric T.—872
Schurtz, Tom—503–504
Schwartz, Eric P.—849
Schwartz, Linda A.—812, 872
Scott, Jill—228
Sebelius, Edward—388
Sebelius, John—388
Sebelius, Kathleen—56–57, 174, 387, 519, 625, 824, 843
Sebelius, K. Gary—388
Seeger, Pete—62
Seelman, Katherine D.—840
Segarra, Pedro E.—218
Selfridge, Peter A.—872
Selig, Stefan M.—872
Sembler, Elizabeth—838, 879
Sessler, Andrew—826
Sewall, Sarah—872
Shaar, Galim—816
Shaar, Gilad—816
Shaar, Ofir—816
Shah, Manish S.—862
Shah, Rajiv—102, 105

Shannon, Thomas A., Jr.—831, 850
Shapiro, Daniel—822
Sharon, Ariel—14, 822
Sharp, Andrew—686
Sharp, Lucy C.—608
Sharpton, Alfred C., Jr.—193, 391
Shear, David B.—874
Sheets, D. Nathan—829, 877
Shelley, Amanda—68–69
Shelton, James H.—626–627, 872
Shenkle, George A.—113
Shepardson, Robert T.—845
Sher, Susan S.—831
Sherman, Beverly—576
Sherman, Kevin—576
Sherman, Richard K.—516, 575–576
Sherman, Robert A.—872
Sherr, Lynn—850
Shiffrin, Mikaela—358–359
Shinseki, Eric K.—405, 494, 571–572, 574–575, 621, 850, 852
Shipman, Claire—627
Shriver, Maria—822
Shugart, Sanford C.—265
Shumlin, Peter E.—166, 168, 217–218, 220, 234, 313, 833
Shuster, William—687
Silliman, Douglas A.—872
Silver, Adam—461
Simas, David M.—825
Simmonds, Dennis R.—548
Simmonds, Roxanne G.—548
Simmons, Federico—688
Simon, Elana—608, 785
Simon, Lou Anna K.—107
Simon, Robert M.—872
Simon, Sanford—785
Simon, Troy—33–34, 37
Sinegal, James D.—76
Singh, Manmohan—850
Singh, Shamina—823, 876
Sinkfield, W. Antoni—87
Smith, Christopher—872
Smith, Dana Shell—847, 881
Smith, Daniel B.—872
Smith, Devlin—3
Smith, Edward G.—862
Smith, Gentry O.—847, 881
Smith, Malcolm X.—576
Smith, Teresa—418
Smith-Ribner, Doris A.—823
Smith-Yoder, Amy—78, 825
Snowden, Edward J.—40–41, 512
Sobel, Mark—829, 877
Soetoro-Ng, Maya—87, 97, 230, 377, 466, 617, 682, 702, 765, 771, 787, 796
Solís, Luis Guillermo—847
Solomont, Alan D.—185
Somers, Jeri K.—850, 882
Soranno, John—68, 449–450
Sorokin, Leo T.—863
Soto, James A.—863
Sotomayor, Sonia M.—19
Southerland, Darien J.—220, 234
Souza, Peter—339
Sparlin, Judith—843
Sparlin, Michael—410, 843
Spaulding, Suzanne E.—873
Speer, Robert M.—842, 880
Sperling, Eugene B.—34
Spielberg, Steven A.—530–533, 848
Spieth, Jordan—773
Spinrad, Rick—848
Spitalnik, Deborah M.—848
Spoelstra, Erik—22–23
Springsteen, Bruce—531
Srinivasan, Srikanth—20
Stabenow, Deborah A.—108, 110, 353
Stang, Douglas L.—859
Stanton, Gregory J.—60
Stanton, Karen Clark—873
Stauskas, Nikolas T.—348–349
Stecklein, Lee—235
Stengel, Richard—873
Stephenson, Randall L.—94
Sterling, Donald T.—461, 517
Stewart, Breanna—685
Stewart, Erin—218
Stivers, Gregory N.—858, 884
Stivers, Jonathan N.—842, 880
Stoltenberg, Jens—642
Stornetta, Lawrence—236
Stover, Aisha—98
Strahan, Michael—852
Strauss, Richard—262
Strauss, Robert A., Sr.—262
Strauss, Robert S.—262
Strickland, Theodore—223, 225
Stripp, Kevin—843
Suarez Gonzalez, Adolpho—839
Sufian, Aviva—532
Suh, Rhea Sun—873
Sullivan, Kathryn D.—853, 873
Suvak, Ron—842
Swanson, Steve—844
Swearengin, Ashley—60
Sweeney, Katelyn—607
Sweet, Antonio—29
Sweet, Francesca—29

Sweet, Rafael—29
Sweet, Ray—29
Sydney, Myka—271

Taddeo-Goldstein, Annette—829, 878
Takano, Mark A.—747
Talwani, Indira—863
Talwar, Puneet—873
Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir—632, 852
Tan Sri Dato' Syaikh Haji Ismail Bin Haji Muhammad—845
Tanden, Neera—766
Tanner, Gordon O.—840, 880
Tapper, Jake—516, 825
Taylor, Francis X.—829, 877
Taylor, Ivy R.—11
Taylor, Leighton—92
Taylor, Michèle—845
Tchen, Christina M.—56
Techau, Kevin W.—864
Terry, Clyde E.—836
Terry, John J.—405–406
Thein Sein—104
Thien, William A.—841
Thomas, Earl V.—576
Thomas, Frank E.—580
Thomas-Greenfield, Linda—839, 873
Thomma, Steve—518
Thompson, C. Michael—236
Thomson, Kathryn B.—873
Thornton, Ricardo, Sr.—857
Thurman, Aisha—840
Tierney, Helen—812, 873
Tierney, John F.—683, 704
Tinsley, Clarice—836
Tisch, Steve—620
Tobias, Andrew—744
Tobias, Constance B.—812, 873
Tobin, Peter C.—863
Toloui, Ramin—842, 880
Trafford, Sherry Moore—864
Trainer, John—79
Trainor, Timothy E.—610
Trinidad, Roy—499–500
Triplett, Nathan—107
Trombley, Dillon—766
Trombley, Maya—766
Trombley, Roger—766, 858
Troop, Reginald—82–83, 86
Trout, Michael N.—108, 723
Tsao-Wu, Grace—354–356, 844
Tsunis, George J.—873
Tuanku Hajah Haminah, Queen—455–456, 458
Tuchi, John J.—863
Tueller, Matthew H.—823, 876
Turinsky, Paul—856
Turner, Mike—745
Tusk, Donald—645, 650
Tyson, Neil deGrasse—197

Udall, Anne J.—873
Udall, Thomas—578
Uehara, Koji—341
Underwood, Reat G.—397, 399
Unnava, Partha—749
Upchurch, Meredith C.—564
Updegrove, Mark K.—841

Valencia-Weber, Gloria—873
Van Amsterdam, Olivia—607
van der Laan, Eberhard—276, 837
Van Hollen, Christopher—567, 846
Van Rompuy, Herman—303, 331, 838, 853
Varela, Erick—91–95
Varela Rodriguez, Juan Carlos—859
Vaughn, M. David—836
Velasquez, Gustavo—823
Verbeke, Johan Cecilia—834
Verlinich, Matt—857
Verno, Carolyn—267, 269
Vetter, Darci L.—874
Victorino, Shane—340
Vilsack, Thomas J.—108, 137–138, 827
Vitter, David B.—687

Wada, Debra S.—847, 881
Wade, Douglas H., Jr.—222
Wade, Dwyane—23
Wakata, Koichi—472, 844
Walesa, Lech—650
Walker, Royal P., Jr.—840
Wall, Anne E.—825
Wall, Robbin—87
Wallace, Robert E.—841
Wallander, Celeste A.—828
Walsh, Martin J.—223, 225
Walz, Timothy J.—711, 795
Warner, Mark R.—215–216
Warren, Elizabeth—684, 695, 704, 706, 783
Warwick, Dionne—538
Washburn, Kevin K.—720
Wasiq, Abdul Haq—632, 641
Wasserman Schultz, Deborah—134, 200, 271, 274, 744, 822
Wassmer, Victoria M. Baecher—873
Waxman, Henry A.—91
Waxman, Janet Kessler—91
Weil, David—873
Weinstock, Bonnie S.—856
Weintraub, Elizabeth—848

Weintraub, Kyle—199
Wellner, Steven M.—864
Wells, Alice G.—842, 880
Wells, Chauvet—196
Wells, Jacques—748
Welsh, Kelly R.—873
Werner, Thomas C.—340
Wertheimer, Laura S.—851, 882
Wesman, Elizabeth C.—836
Westphal, Joseph W.—839, 873
Whalen, Lindsay—712
Wheeler, Thomas E.—96, 98
Whitaker, Kevin—873
White, Brett—843
White, Brian—83
White, Cheryl—554
White, Curt—554
White, Gavin—616, 617
White, Kyle J.—554, 843, 848
White, Mark W.—380
White, Morgan—616
White, Ronnie L.—863
White, William H.—380
White-Scott, Sheryl—848
Whittaker, Dan—588
Wiesel, Elie—531
Wilkins, Robert L.—20
Willem-Alexander, King—277, 287, 837
Williams, Betty—857
Williams, Brian—854
Williams, Casey—525
Williams, Ellen Dudley—874
Williams, Falecia—265, 267, 271
Williams, John Eddie, Jr.—379
Williams, Ronald A.—823
Williams, Roy K.J.—874
Williams, Sheridan—379
Williams-Paisley, Kimberly—597
Wilson, Frederica S.—193, 230
Wilson, Jean "Nana"—271–274
Wilson, Russell C.—576–577
Windsor, Edith—744–745, 815
Winfrey, Oprah—517
Winnefeld, James A. "Sandy"—353, 840
Winton, Claire—608
Wolfe, Lydia—608
Wolff, Tobias B.—813
Woo, Anita—466, 470–471, 473, 476, 480
Wood, Robert A.—874
Woods, Eldrick T. "Tiger"—773–774
Woodson, Randy—24
Woody, Leah—367–368
Work, Robert O.—828, 877
Wormuth, Christine E.—826, 876
Wozniak, Stephen G.—748
Wright, Jessica Garfola—874
Wright, Timothy—403–404
Wright, TyKiah R.—823
Wu, Portia Y.—874
Wylie, Mike—499–500

Xi Jinping—278, 446, 834

Yakota, Sakie—844
Yakota, Shigeru—844
Yandle, Staci M.—745, 823, 875
Yang Dee-hong—452
Yanukovych, Viktor—158, 163, 215, 239, 242, 333
Yatsenyuk, Arseniy—200, 239, 255, 289, 294, 333, 834
Yellen, Janet L.—2, 874
Yeoh, Cheryl—465
Yifrach, Eyal—816
Yifrach, Iris—816
Yifrach, Ori—816
Yohannes, Daniel W.—874
Yosses, William—814
Young, Andrew J., Jr.—383
Young, Jason W.—847
Young, Ling—563
Young, Shirley—766, 858
Yudin, Michael K.—874
Yuen, Jonathan A.—857

Zamosky, Lisa—835
Zanzi, Italo—838
Zemke, Adam F.—350
Zients, Jeffrey D.—570, 836
Zuckerberg, Mark E.—694, 836
Zuma, Jacob—851
Zuniga, Ricardo—823, 850

Document Categories List

Addresses and Remarks
- *See also* Addresses to the Nation; Appointments and Nominations; Bill Signings and Vetoes; Interviews With the News Media; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials; Resignations and Retirements
- 2012–2013 NCAA championship teams—234
- 2013 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion—774
- 2013 National Basketball Association Champion Miami Heat—22
- 2013 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Minnesota Lynx—711
- 2013 World Series Champion Boston Red Sox—339
- 2014 National and State Teachers of the Year—502
- 2014 U.S. Olympic and Paralympic teams, welcoming ceremony—356
- Administrator of the Small Business Administration Maria Contreras-Sweet, swearing-in ceremony—371
- Advancing Pay Equality Through Compensation Data Collection, signing the memorandum—373
- Afghanistan, drawdown of U.S. military personnel—603
- Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan
  - Military and diplomatic leaders, meeting with President Obama—596
  - U.S. troops, remarks—596
- Bladensburg High School in Bladensburg, MD—367
- Boundary Enlargement of the California Coastal National Monument, signing a proclamation regarding—236
- Buck Lodge Middle School in Adelphi, MD—96
- Business executives, roundtable discussion in Seoul, South Korea—450
- Business leaders, meeting with President—570
- Cabinet, meeting with President—20
- Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, CT—218
- "Cesar Chavez," White House screening—260
- Cinco de Mayo celebration—522
- College opportunity, expansion efforts—33
- Commander in Chief's Trophy—414
- Community College of Allegheny County North Campus in North Fayette Township, PA—400
- Coral Reef Senior High School in Miami, FL—229
- Costco Wholesale Corp. Woodmore Town Centre Warehouse in Glenarden, MD—72
- D-day landing at Normandy, France, 70th anniversary, remarks in Colleville-sur-Mer, France—676

Addresses and Remarks—Continued
- Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee fundraisers
  - Houston, TX—379
  - La Jolla, CA, lunch—534
  - Los Angeles, CA, dinner—528
  - Miami, FL, dinner—271
  - Minneapolis, MN—795
  - Potomac, MD, dinner—567
- Democratic Governors Association
  - Dinner—166
  - Meeting—169
- Democratic National Committee
  - Boston, MA, dinner—223
  - Chicago, IL, dinner—354
  - LGBT Gala in New York City—744
  - San Jose, CA, reception—538
  - Washington, DC, meeting—200
- Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee fundraisers
  - Chicago, IL, dinner—588
  - Chicago, IL, reception—585
  - Houston, TX—379
  - Los Angeles, CA, dinner—528
  - McLean, VA, dinner—215
  - New York City, dinner—237, 559
  - Weston, MA—706
- Department of State's International Women of Courage Award, presentation in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia—339
- Easter prayer breakfast—397
- Emergency unemployment insurance—2
- Environmental Protection Agency's clean power plan, teleconference remarks to public health organizations—633
- European youth in Brussels, Belgium—320
- Federal budget—212
- Federal employment opportunities for the unemployed, enhancing safeguards to prevent undue denial, signing the memorandum—91
- Federal student loan borrowers, assistance efforts, signing the memorandum—680
- Firebaugh, CA
  - Drought relief efforts and water management policy, roundtable discussion—136
  - Remarks—138
- Fort Bonifacio in Taguig, Philippines, U.S. and Filipino troops—498

Addresses and Remarks—Continued
Fort Hood, TX, shooting
Memorial service for victims at Fort Hood, TX—377
Remarks in Chicago, IL—353
General Electric Co. gas engines plant in Waukesha, WI—82
House Democratic Issues Conference in Cambridge, MD—134
Hurricane preparedness, Federal Emergency Management Agency briefing—628
Immigration reform
Meeting with law enforcement leaders—552
Remarks—806
"In Performance at the White House: Women of Soul"—228
Iraq situation—717, 752
League of Conservation Voters Capital Dinner—775
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month, reception—813
Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library Civil Rights Summit in Austin, TX—382
Malaysian and U.S. companies, commercial agreements signing in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia—484
Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre in Cyberjaya, Malaysia—465
Manufacturing innovation institutes, remarks announcing new—175
McGavock High School in Nashville, TN—86
Medal of Honor
Army veterans of World War II, the Korean war, and the Vietnam war, presentation—257
Cpl. W. Kyle Carpenter, presentation—757
Sgt. Kyle J. White, presentation—554
Memorial Day ceremony in Arlington, VA—600
Miami, FL, remarks to White House press pool—229
Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI—106
Minimum wage
Federal contractors, signing the Executive order establishing—130
Remarks—500
Minneapolis, MN
Remarks—797
Town hall meeting and question-and-answer session—779
Miraikan Science Expo in Tokyo, Japan—429
My Brother's Keeper
Initiative, remarks—190
Task Force, meeting—626
National Action Network, 16th annual convention in New York City—391
National Association of Police Organizations, ceremony honoring TOP COPS—547

Addresses and Remarks—Continued
National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, NY—579
National Governors Association
Dinner—171
Meeting—172
National Prayer Breakfast—102
National September 11 Memorial & Museum, dedication ceremony in New York City—562
NCAA men's and women's basketball champions University of Connecticut Huskies—685
New Britain, CT, remarks to White House press pool—217
Non-Retaliation for Disclosure of Compensation Information, signing the Executive order—373
North American business, civil society, and education leaders, remarks with President Peña Nieto of Mexico and Prime Minister Harper of Canada in Toluca, Mexico—149
North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC—24
Nowruz, videotaped remarks—270
Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, Netherlands, closing remarks—284
Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, signing the proclamation establishing—577
Organizing for Action
Dinner—184
Summit—180
Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act—342
Presidential Commission on Election Administration, meeting—55
President's Cup, reception—773
President's Export Council, meeting—750
Promise Zones initiative—8
Safeway Inc. distribution center in Upper Marlboro, MD—143
Saint Paul, MN—186
Seoul, South Korea, naturalization ceremony—436
Sexual assault, prevention efforts—56
Sgt. Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, release from captivity by Taliban forces in Afghanistan—632
Shake Shack restaurant in Washington, DC—564
Snohomish County Fire District 25/Oso Fire Department in Arlington, WA—417
Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, Flag Day celebration in Cannon Ball, ND—720
Student loan debt and college affordability, question-and-answer session with Tumblr participants—689
St. Patrick's Day reception—250
Super Bowl Champion Seattle Seahawks—575
TechShop Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, PA, question-and-answer session—729
Ukraine situation—199, 225, 255, 263

Addresses and Remarks—Continued
University of California, Irvine, commencement address in Anaheim, CA—723
University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, MI—347
Updating and modernizing overtime regulations, signing the memorandum—245
USC Shoah Foundation in Los Angeles, CA—530
U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan in Seoul, South Korea—451
U.S. Conference of Mayors reception—59
U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, commencement address—610
U.S. signals intelligence and electronic surveillance programs—38
U.S. Steel Corp. Mon Valley Works Irvin Plant in West Mifflin, PA—76
Valencia College, West Campus, in Orlando, FL—265
Veterans health care—571
Vilonia, AR, tornado damage, tour—525
Walmart store in Mountain View, CA—542
Warsaw, Poland
Freedom Day, 25th anniversary—650
U.S. and Polish troops at Warsaw Chopin Airport—636
Washington Irving Boat Club in Tarrytown, NY—556
Weekly addresses—1, 13, 54, 61, 95, 111, 142, 170, 207, 234, 253, 274, 366, 396, 416, 449, 514, 566, 594, 630, 680, 722, 765, 804
White House Correspondents' Association dinner—515
White House Easter Egg Roll—416
White House Healthy Kids and Safe Sports Concussion Summit—617
White House Maker Faire—747
White House Science Fair—605
White House Student Film Festival—197
White House Summit on Working Families—766
Women Members of Congress—243
Worcester Technical High School in Worcester, MA, commencement address—701
Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride, opening ceremony—405
Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, town hall and question-and-answer session at University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia—466

Addresses to the Nation
State of the Union—62

Appointments and Nominations
See also Digest, Nominations Submitted, and Checklist at the end of this volume
Administrator of the Small Business Administration, nomination, remarks—28

Appointments and Nominations—Continued
Health and Human Services Secretary, nomination, remarks—387
Housing and Urban Development Secretary, nomination, remarks—591
Office of Management and Budget Director, nomination, remarks—591
Veterans Affairs Secretary, nomination, remarks—809
White House Press Secretary, appointment, remarks—627

Bill Signings and Vetoes
Agricultural Act of 2014, signing remarks—106
Congressional Gold Medal to 65th Infantry Regiment, legislation awarding, signing remarks—687
Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, signing remarks—52
Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act, signing remarks—360
National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2014, signing statement—228
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Conservation and Recreation Act, signing statement—248
United Nations representatives, legislation on U.S. visa limitations, signing statement—415
Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, signing remarks—687

Communications to Congress
American Institute in Taiwan and Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the U.S., proposed agreement for cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, message transmitting—5
Belarus, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—700
Budget amendments for fiscal year 2015, letter transmitting—505, 795
Burma, U.S. national emergency, letter on continuation—563
Central African Republic, blocking property of certain persons, letter—550
Chad, U.S. Armed Forces personnel, letter on deployment—579
Combat-equipped Armed Forces, U.S., letter on deployment—714
Côte d'Ivoire, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—101
Cuba, anchorage and movement of vessels, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—180
Global counterterrorism and overseas contingency operations, letter designating funds—54
Iceland, whaling, Pelly certification, message—346
International Atomic Energy Agency, agreement with U.S., message transmitting third amendment—80

Communications to Congress—Continued
Iran, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—245
Iraq
Development fund, letter ending immunities granted—609
U.S. Armed Forces personnel, letter on deployment—729, 794, 819
U.S. national emergency, letter on continuation—567
Kingpin Act, letter transmitting designations—629
Libya, U.S. national emergency, letter on continuation—169
Middle East, terrorists who threaten to disrupt the peace process, U.S. national emergency, letter on continuation—55
North Korea, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—764
Río Grande Valley areas of U.S.-Mexico border, humanitarian situation, letter reporting on efforts to address—817
Russia
Generalized System of Preferences program, message on withdrawing designation as beneficiary country—528
U.S. national emergency with respect to disposition of highly enriched uranium, message on continuation—761
Somalia, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—373
South Sudan, blocking property of certain persons, message—361
Syria, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—526
Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic, combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces deployment, letter—298
Ukraine
Blocking property of additional persons, letter—254, 264
Blocking property of certain persons contributing to the situation in Ukraine, message—227
U.S. International Trade Commission, designation of Meredith M. Broadbent as Chair and Dean A. Pinkert as Vice Chair, message—744
U.S.-Poland taxation convention, message transmitting—571
U.S.-Spain Taxation Convention, protocol amending, message transmitting—527
Vietnam, nuclear energy cooperation with U.S., memorandum—536
Western Balkans, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—772
Communications to Congress—Continued
Yemen, U.S. national emergency, letter on continuation—550
Zimbabwe, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—206

Communications to Federal Agencies
Iceland, whaling, Pelly certification, memorandum—345
Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and seafood fraud, efforts to combat, memorandum—741
International travelers to U.S., national goal and airport-specific action plans to enhance entry process, memorandum—583
National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, memorandum delegating reporting functions—773
Unaccompanied alien children across the U.S. Southwest border, response to influx, memorandum—635

Directives
Conventional arms transfer policy, U.S.—30
U.S. signals intelligence activities—46

Interviews With the News Media
Exchanges with reporters
Washington, DC—212
White House—15, 20, 208, 239, 243, 248, 571, 621, 708, 717, 752, 762
Interviews
ABC, "Live! With Kelly & Michael" program—852
CBS, "CBS This Morning" program—859
CBS, "Evening News" program—838
CBS News—843
CNN, "New Day" program—859
CNN, "The Lead" program—825
ESPN—836
Fox News—826
Funny or Die website, "Between Two Ferns" program—831
Germany, ZDF public television broadcaster—824
KARE in Minneapolis, MN—836
KBXX in Houston, TX—827
KDFW in Dallas, TX—836
KPHO in Phoenix, AZ—836
KSDK in St. Louis, MO—836
MSNBC, "Morning Joe" program—859
National meteorologists, "Weather From the White House" program—848
NBC 7 in San Diego, CA—836
NBC, "Ellen" program—836
NBC, "NBC Nightly News With Brian Williams" program—854
NBC Sports—827

Interviews With the News Media—Continued
Interviews—Continued
NECN in Newton, MA—836
New Yorker magazine—821
NPR, "Morning Edition" program—852
Parade magazine—850
TNT, "Inside the NBA" program—829
WebMD Health Corp.—835
Joint news conferences
Canada, Prime Minister Harper—155
European Commission, President Barroso—303
European Council, President Van Rompuy—303
France, President Hollande—115
Germany, Chancellor Merkel—505
Italy, Prime Minister Renzi—326
Japan, Prime Minister Abe—420
Malaysia, Prime Minister Najib—456
Mexico, President Peña Nieto—155
Netherlands, Prime Minister Rutte—285
Philippines, President Aquino—485
Poland, President Komorowski—637
South Korea, President Park—439
United Kingdom, Prime Minister Cameron—658
News conference, April 17—406

Joint Statements
Belgium, France, Germany, and South Korea, multinational cooperation on high-density low-enriched uranium fuel development—297
Belgium, Prime Minister Di Rupo—281
Canada, Prime Minister Harper—152
Djibouti, President Guelleh—520
Enhancing radiological security—282
European Union
Combating illicit trafficking—296
Relations with U.S.—313
Group of Seven leaders
Brussels summit declaration—667
Foreign policy—654
Ukraine situation—208, 242, 454
Hague Declaration—283
Italy, President Napolitano—281
Japan, Prime Minister Abe—280, 432
Kazakhstan, President Nazarbayev, nonproliferation and nuclear security cooperation—295
Malaysia, Prime Minister Najib—480
Maritime supply chain security enhancements—298
Mexico, President Peña Nieto—152
Netherlands, Prime Minister Rutte—279
Tunisia, Prime Minister Jomaa—364
Ukraine, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk—294

Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials
See also Interviews With the News Media; Joint Statements
Abu Dhabi, Crown Prince Mohammed—837
Afghanistan, President Karzai—831, 847, 851
Australia, Prime Minister Abbott—708
Belgium
King Philippe—300, 853
Prime Minister Di Rupo—300, 853
Canada, Prime Minister Harper—830, 832, 856
Central and Eastern European leaders—648
Chile, President Bachelet—805
China, President Xi—278, 834
Djibouti, President Guelleh—519
Egypt, President Elsisi—855
Estonia, President Ilves—834
European Union
European Commission, President Barroso—837, 853
European Council, President Van Rompuy—838, 853
France, President Hollande—112–113, 128, 828, 832, 834, 842, 845, 849, 854, 858
Germany, Chancellor Merkel—821, 830, 832–834, 836, 841, 843, 845, 847, 858
Haiti, President Martelly—106
Holy See (Vatican City)
Pope Francis—838
Secretary of State Parolin—838
India
Prime Minister Singh—850
Prime Minister-elect Modi—849
Iraq, Council of Representatives Speaker Nujayfi—824
Ireland, Prime Minister Kenny—248, 835
Israel
President Peres—858
Prime Minister Netanyahu—208
Italy
President Napolitano—838
Prime Minister Letta—829
Prime Minister Renzi—830, 834, 838, 845, 858
Japan
Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko—431, 844–845
Prime Minister Abe—299, 419, 833, 837, 844
Jordan, King Abdullah—140, 829, 850
Kazakhstan, President Nazarbayev—834, 837
Latvia, President Berzins—834
Lebanon, Prime Minister Salam—837
Lithuania, President Grybauskaite—834
Malaysia
King Abdul Halim—454, 845
Prime Minister Najib—845–846

Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials—Continued
Mexico, President Peña Nieto—147, 822, 830, 857
Moldova, Prime Minister Leanca—832
Netherlands
King Willem-Alexander—837
Prime Minister Rutte—275, 837
New Zealand, Prime Minister Key—762, 821
North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Secretary General Rasumussen—311
Palestinian Authority, President Abbas—256, 836
Philippines, President Aquino—496, 846
Poland
President Komorowski—636, 832, 853
Prime Minister Tusk—645
Qatar
Amir Tamim—852
Former Amir Hamad—852
Russia, President Putin—830, 832–833, 835, 839, 842, 854, 858
Saudi Arabia, King Abdallah—839
South Africa, President Zuma—851
South Korea, President Park—299, 437, 438, 845
Spain
King Carlos—857
Prime Minister Rajoy—15, 834
Syria, National Coalition for Revolutionary and Opposition Forces President Jarba—849
Tibet, Dalai Lama—830
Tunisia, Prime Minister Jomaa—362, 826, 841
Turkey
President Gul—849
Prime Minister Erdogan—830
Ukraine
President-elect Poroshenko—648, 852
Prime Minister Yatsenyuk—239
United Arab Emirates, Armed Forces Deputy Supreme Commander Mohammed—832, 837
United Kingdom, Prime Minister Cameron—823, 832–834, 843, 845, 854, 858
Uruguay, President Mujica—545
Yemen, President Hadi—825

Resignations and Retirements
Cabinet Secretary, resignation, statement—19
Defense Acting Deputy Secretary, retirement, statement—526
Health and Human Services Secretary, resignation, remarks—387
State Deputy Secretary, retirement, statement—395
Veterans Affairs Secretary, resignation, remarks—621

Statements by the President
See also Appointments and Nominations; Bill Signings and Vetoes; Joint Statements; Resignations and Retirements
1965 Voting Rights March, 45th anniversary—233
Accelerating Medicines Partnership—100
Adegbile, Debo P., Senate failure to confirm as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights—223
Afghanistan, Presidential election—366
Agricultural Act of 2014, Senate passage—100
Andrews, Rep. Robert E., decision not to seek reelection—100
Armenian Remembrance Day—430
Ash Wednesday—223
Boston Marathon bombing, first anniversary—399
Brown v. *Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, 60th anniversary—565
Burwell, Sylvia Mathews, Senate confirmation as Secretary of Health and Human Services—667
Bush, Former First Lady Barbara, health—1
Coburn, Sen. Thomas A., decision not to seek reelection—53
Connecticut, legislation to raise minimum wage, statement on passage—313
Contreras-Sweet, Maria, Senate confirmation as Administrator of the Small Business Administration—338
Coptic Orthodox Christmas—5
CVS Caremark Corp.'s decision to stop selling tobacco products—101
Deaths
Angelou, Maya—617
Baker, former Sen. Howard H., Jr.—794
Dee, Ruby—713
Denton, former Sen. Jeremiah A., Jr.—338
Fraenkel, Naftali—816
Frank, Billy, Jr.—524
Márquez, Gabriel García—413
Mondale, Joan Adams—96
Oberstar, former Rep. James L.—515
Ramis, Harold—179
Seeger, Pete—62
Shaar, Gilad—816
Sharon, Ariel, former Prime Minister of Israel—14
Strauss, Robert S.—262
Yifrach, Eyal—816
Dingell, Rep. John D., Jr., decision not to seek reelection—175
Easter—415
Emergency unemployment insurance legislation, Senate action—372
Foxman, Abraham H., retirement as National Director of Anti-Defamation League—127

Statements by the President—Continued
"Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity," National Institute of Standards and Technology release—133
Gap Inc., decision to increase employee wages—152
Hawaii, legislation to raise minimum wage, passage—502
Holocaust Remembrance Day—495
Holt, Rep. Rush D., Jr., decision not to seek reelection—147
Immigration reform legislation, House of Representatives action—313, 404
India, national elections—549
International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia—565
International Holocaust Remembrance Day—62
Iranian nuclear weapons development, Joint Plan of Action to prevent—14
Iraq, parliamentary elections—504
Israel
Independence Day—524
Presidential election—700
Juneteenth—761
Khattala, Ahmed Abu, capture by U.S. Special Forces and FBI personnel in Benghazi, Libya—741
Libya, elections—793
Maryland, legislation to raise minimum wage, passage—372
Massachusetts, legislation to raise minimum wage, passage—761
McCarthy, Rep. Carolyn, decision not to seek reelection—8
McLeod, Rep. Gloria Negrete, decision not to seek reelection—147
Miller, Rep. George, III, decision not to seek reelection—20
Minnesota, legislation to raise minimum wage, passage—386
Moran, Rep. James P., decision not to seek reelection—30
National Security Agency, section 215 bulk telephony metadata program—337

Statements by the President—Continued
National Small Business Week—549
Owens, Rep. William L., decision not to seek reelection—24
Passover—399
Pastor, Rep. Edward L., decision not to seek reelection—197
Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, fourth anniversary—275
Popes John XXIII and John Paul II, canonization—495
Public debt limit, legislation increasing, Congressional passage—134
Ramadan—803
Roe v. *Wade* Supreme Court decision, 41st anniversary—59
Rwandan genocide, 20th anniversary—367
Sgt. Bowe R. Bergdahl, USA, release from captivity by Taliban forces in Afghanistan—631
Shootings in Overland Park, KS—396
South Korea, *Sewol* ferry, sinking—413
South Sudan situation—60
Spain, investiture of King Felipe VI—760
Uganda, legislation to criminalize homosexuality, parliamentary passage—143
Ukraine, Presidential election—595
U.S. Conference of Mayors My Brother's Keeper Task Force, establishment—764
Wage equality legislation, Senate action to block—379
War on Poverty, 50th anniversary—7
Waxman, Rep. Henry A., decision not to seek reelection—91
Wildlife trafficking, efforts to combat—127
Wilkins, Robert L., Senate confirmation as judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit—20
World Refugee Day—763
Yellen, Janet L., Senate confirmation as Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System—2